FILE NAME: ALCOA (ALC)

DATE: 0000

DOC#: ALC000

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Report of Barry Castleman

Alcoa

Alcoa was a member of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation from 1936 until 1975 or later, and thereby received the monthly *Industrial Hygiene Digest* containing abstracts of articles in medical and scientific journals from around the world. During this time, there were dozens of abstracts of papers and editorials about asbestosis and cancers associated with asbestos. Alcoa was represented at the 1935 meeting that led to the founding of IHF, consequent to the rising cost of compensation claims against US manufacturers by workers alleging disability from asbestosis and silicosis.

In 1941-44, Dr. Francis Frary of Alcoa corresponded with Dr. Leroy Gardner, director of the Saranac Laboratory, leading research institution used by US industry for the study of the dangers of breathing industrial dusts. Frary wanted Saranac to conduct experimental studies of the inhalation of aluminum compounds and silica.

In 1942, an article published in the *Medical Bulletin of the Veterans Administration* described asbestosis in an aluminum plant worker from wearing asbestos apron and gloves.

An Alcoa memo described successful efforts to obtain union cooperation in management's provision of a change of clothes and showers after working shifts with a chemical. (Dickson, July 2, 1948)

Alcoa Medical Director Dudley Irwin was on the steering committee for the American Foundryman's Society listed in a 1952 publication in which it was noted that asbestosis caused impairment of lung function.

A medical paper, "Occupational Cancer", was co-authored by Dr. Bertram Dinman, noting evidence that asbestos dust caused lung cancer. (Fraser, Dinman, Ashe, *Ohio State Med. J* 55:1217-22, 1959) Dr. Dinman would become Medical Director of Alcoa from 1973-1978 and Vice President for Health and Safety until 1987.

Prompted by visits by health officials, Alcoa managers at the Vernon, California location evaluated exhaust systems on saws cutting asbestos-containing Marinite boards. "We decided to discontinue this practice and have sent our work to outside shops." (FH Regehr memo, 1/24/62)

Asbestos use in potlining operations associated with risk of asbestosis and lung cancer (HA Semkin memo 4/9/65).

In 1968, a brick mason with extensive exposure to asbestos from potroom repairs raised concern that he and his family were at risk of cancer from asbestos based on a news reports in the "Austin Statesman". (HA Semkin memos 1/12/68 and 1/16/68) Another

Semkin memo attached a *Washington Post* article on mesothelioma, "New Cancer Cause Puzzle to Doctors" 12/26/67)

A confidential memo on the health effects of asbestos, including mesothelioma and the combined lung cancer risk from smoking and work with asbestos, was circulated in Alcoa (Environmental Effects of Asbestos, Chlorine Institute, 3/3/71).

Soon after the publication of the OSHA asbestos regulations in June 1972, EB Youngblut, Alcoa corporate workers' compensation manager, noted that a provision of the regs required management to notify a worker in writing within 5 days if air measurements of the worker's exposure exceed the permissible exposure limits. In handwritten notes, Youngblut noted that workers so advised would ask for increased pay based on the hazard, go to the union or attorneys, file workers' compensation claims against Alcoa ("It will not be possible to defend the case"). He noted that 50 employees and 1% of the hourly workforce in Tennessee could be exposed to asbestos in excess of the standards. He closed, "Perhaps we should consider not notifying the employee and taking our chances with an inspection and citation."

Upon Alcoa being inspected and cited for violations of the asbestos regulations in Indiana, penalties assessed were $30 to $90 and a total of $240 for 5 violations. Alcoa industrial hygienist Thomas Bonney commented, "The penalties imposed are of small concern when compared to the cost of correcting the conditions for which they were cited." (3/28/73) The OSHA inspectors neglected to cite Alcoa for failing to notify workers whose exposures exceeded the ceiling permissible exposure limit, though other violations for such exposures were recorded.

In 1973, a questionnaire was sent to all operations about compliance with asbestos regulations. This detailed all operations where asbestos hazards existed, included some air sampling data, and specified corrective measures (dos and don'ts). (RC Hinkle, OSHA Asbestos Compliance Questionnaire, 5/29/73)

Arkansas manager reports the practice that Alcoa was not obligated to tell employees exposed up to 50 f/ml, provided that the workers were fitted with respirators. The ceiling Permissible Exposure Limit was 10 f/ml. (R Owen, 3/28/74)

Bonney noted a citation and $600 fine by OSHA for mixing asbestos with molasses at Point Comfort, a use that was subsequently discontinued. (12/9/74)

Asbestos mill board used in pot lining became brittle and crumbly, hence it was being phased out in favor of substitute material. (HN Mueller, 4/15/76)

OSHA citations for violations of asbestos regulations included repeated violations cited on a previous inspection. For lack of labeling and proper bagging of asbestos waste materials, fines of $410 and $820 were levied. (issued 7/27/78)

Continuing over-exposures at Marinite sawing operations persisted in Tennessee in 1979 (KP Karsten, 4/19/79)

Draft "Removal of Asbestos-Containing Products" refers to asbestos replacement program starting 1978 and describes protective measures for in-place asbestos. (EE Rumberger, 10/20/82)