

Subject: Occupational Safety and Health - Exposure to Airborne
Asbestos Fibers

type letter: Strong Recommendation

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to: Company Presidents and AT&T Vice Presidents

from: Vice Presidents - Human Resources

description: Provides guidelines for a comprehensive program designed to protect
employees from occupational exposure to airborne asbestos fibers.

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Section 29 CFR 1910.1001 of Standards issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires all employers to establish and maintain an effective program for protecting their employees from exposures to airborne asbestos fibers which are above those permitted by this Standard. This letter and its attachment provide guidelines and procedures to assist the Operating Telephone Companies in developing and implementing the programs that are necessary to safeguard the health of their employees and to assure compliance with the current OSHA Standard for asbestos.

In recent years, the Bell System has made substantial progress toward eliminating the purchase and use of buildings, products and other materials which contain asbestos. Unfortunately, the elimination of asbestos in new production processes, products, and materials, and in the construction of new buildings and other facilities, does not guarantee that all exposures to asbestos have been eliminated in the existing work environment. Baseline environmental studies conducted by the Environmental Health and Safety Department of Bell Telephone Laboratories show that Bell System workplaces generally do not expose employees to hazardous concentrations of asbestos fibers. Where exposures do occur, they are generally well below those permitted by the current OSHA standard. However, these studies have identified several potential sources of contamination which result either from earlier use of asbestos (i.e., fireproofing and insulation for buildings, steam pipes, boilers, air plenums, etc.) or from existing uses of asbestos for which no suitable substitutes have yet been found (i.e., motor vehicle brake shoes and clutches).

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ATT-214



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LLA 001210

GL 77-07-024, Motor Vehicle Maintenance - Brakes and Clutches, and GL 78-08-054, Motor Vehicle Maintenance - Protection Against Exposure to Asbestos Fibers, provided recommendations and procedures for protecting employees from exposure to airborne asbestos fibers while performing maintenance operations on brake and clutch assemblies in Company-owned motor vehicles. When properly implemented, these procedures will reduce asbestos exposure levels to well below those allowed by the present Standard.

SR 79-05-398, Occupational Safety and Health - Exposure to Airborne Asbestos Fibers - Request for Survey requested the Operating Telephone Companies to initiate a comprehensive survey to identify Company-owned and leased facilities in which sprayed-on asbestos was used for fireproofing and heat insulation. RL 79-07-254, Asbestos Hazards in Leased Buildings, recommended that facilities under consideration for lease be reviewed for potential hazards caused by the use of building materials that contain asbestos. SR 80-06-010, Occupational Safety and Health - Sprayed-on Asbestos in Company-owned and Leased Buildings, recommends procedures that should be followed in buildings identified by this survey to minimize the risk of exposing employees to asbestos fibers which are potentially harmful to their health.

Station and PBX installation, rearrangement, and repair operations also frequently require employees to enter and work in buildings owned or leased by customers in which sprayed-on asbestos has been used for general fireproofing or heat insulation. Where exposures to asbestos fibers appear to jeopardize the safety or health of company employees who must enter these workplaces to conduct company business, the Companies should follow policies and procedures included in PO 80-07-216.

Detailed information is included in the attached "Guidelines for Controlling Occupational Exposure to Asbestos Fibers" to assist the Companies in developing and implementing a program for identifying, evaluating, and controlling potential sources of exposure found in their work environments. Estimated costs for implementing this program in Company-owned and leased buildings were included in SR 80-06-010. Estimated costs for customer premises have not been provided since estimates of the frequency and severity of asbestos hazards on customer premises are not available.

information package
~~Audio tape~~ is being developed to assist the Companies inform their employees about the nature and source of potential exposure to asbestos in their workplaces and work environments. Information concerning cost and availability will be available later this year.

LLA 001211

Questions regarding this letter, or its attachment, should be referred to the following persons:

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Safety	J. M. Degen	(201) 540-6510
Support Services	N. J. DeCapua	(201) 221-4984

Vice President - Human Resources

Attachment

LLA 001212