



DOW CHEMICAL U.S.A.

July 20, 1988

LOUISIANA DIVISION
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Polyethylene A
Building 807

1988 POLYETHYLENE A PLANT HEALTH TEAM REVIEW

Attendees: B. Armstong, M. Ryland, D. Lee, M. Currier, B. Ledford,
J. Paul, B. Heinze

Absent: P. Harich, M. Nevill

Summary:

The main topics of discussion included a review of the process, a plant tour, a review of 1987 industrial hygiene activity, 1988 goals and plans, and a summary of the plant Health Surveillance Program results.

1. The frequency of reactor decompositions has been significantly reduced. Noise and a vapor cloud are two concerns associated with decompositions.
2. Only three of eight jobs surveyed for potential noise exposure were above OSHA PEL. The shift supervisor exposure readings decreased from historical levels.
3. There are several projects underway that will help reduce noise levels in the compressor buildings.
4. The handling of chloroform and acetic acid in the plant lab was monitored. The monitoring results were well below the 10 ppm exposure guideline for these materials.
5. All vessels and lines insulated with asbestos were identified. Over 58,000 pounds of asbestos were removed during the year. The removal work was completed in buildings 801, 804 and 807.
6. Isopar C was replaced with the less volatile Isopar H material. This replacement should reduce vapor emissions to the atmosphere.
7. Plans for 1988 include conducting noise surveys of the area and selected personnel; and sampling for dust, Isopar H and Isopar M.

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8. Dr. Carrier discussed the results of the plant's Health Surveillance Program. There were no significant threshold shifts in hearing acuity, but two cases of audiogram downtrends were noted. Two pulmonary function abnormalities were diagnosed, the cause of each being non-job related. In summary, the testing program indicated no job-related adverse health effects.

Recommendations:

1. Audit noise warning signs in the block. These signs should be located around the periphery of areas exceeding 90 decibels.
2. Perform an annual inspection of the condition of asbestos insulating material in the block. Documentation of this inspection and its findings should become part of the asbestos recordkeeping system.
3. Footnote the noise monitoring data table with a statement explaining how to convert the Dow 85 decibel standard to OSHA's 90 decibel standard (i.e. divide dose % by two).

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