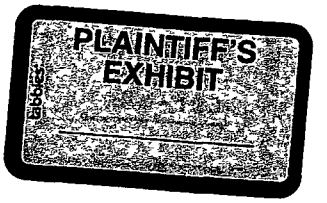
FRICTION PRODUCTS GROUP
Winchester

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November 1, 1977

Dr. F.W. Knoch
Director, Medical Department
Chicago Office

With reference to your letter to Mr. Ralph S. Combs of October 19, 1977, I appreciate your kind words as well as constructive criticism. Our new plant nurse has already had an impact on the accident rate at this facility, and I would expect the incident rate in the "Occupational Injury Incidence Report" to be significantly improved over the next few months.

However, your second to last paragraph is somewhat unclear since it is not necessary to wear respirators in any of our plants as we maintain an asbestos fiber count below two fibers per cubic centimeter at all times. Our ability to live within this specification has been verified by our own Medical Department as well as the government, and thus respirators are strictly a safety tool which is made available to those employees who desire to wear one for their own reasons.

Recent questions concerning safety glasses and side shields have been expressed by various persons, but particularly by yourself during your tours of Winchester and Salisbury.

Based on this, I have been attempting to inform myself as to the rules and regulations governing this issue, and I have learned that if there are any, they have not been brought to the attention of responsible individuals. I think we can assume that we all agree that side shields are safer than glasses without side shields, but so are safety shoes in comparison to regular shoes and hair nets, tight fitting clothes, no jewelry, etc., etc.

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There are many areas we can work on in order to bring down our accident rate. The order of priority should, of course, be based on frequency, potential exposure, etc., and I trust if there is a push for safety glasses with side shields, a significant cost item, that there is enough information available to substantiate this item being emphasized and stressed before other concerns.

My own primary concerns, for obvious reasons, are related to the amount of information we give our employees on the potential hazards of asbestos. Since I have found no corporate policy or procedure related to this concern, we have endeavored to assure ourselves, as well as our employees, of the very basics. With this, I mean that we are attempting to make sure that certain asbestos related information has been given to all our employees and that they understand the information they have received. A booklet has been printed in two copies: one for our current employees and one for new employees. Both copies will have a tear-out section, which is to be completed and returned to the Personnel Department. I think you will agree that this booklet is frank, straightforward, easy to understand, and simple to complete; and I am looking forward to your comments prior to its release.

B. Iwarsson

BI:bc
cc: Mr. D.K. Rennie
Enclosures (2)

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