

April 13, 1972

L. B. Wilson, Jr.
Safety and Protection Supervisor
Textile Fibers Department
Chestnut Run Administration

ASBESTOS

RE: Letter from L. B. Wilson, Jr. to J. F. Morgan 4/26/72

This letter concerns my visit to the Chestnut Run Laboratories on 3/7/72. At this time a review was made of typical operations where asbestos-containing materials are handled. The areas observed were:

- 1) Elastomers Lab. - handling of loose fibers
- 2) Textile Research Lab., Operations - cutting of asbestos paper on "elicker"
- 3) Central Maintenance - cutting of asbestos insulation

Elastomers Lab.

Asbestos is transferred from a fiber pack drum to a 5-gallon container. The work is performed in a canopy hood enclosed on three sides. Some dust is generated but the hood aids in controlling it. The frequency of this operation is about once every three months and requires about five minutes of handling. A MSA Duffies 77 respirator was worn by the person working with the asbestos.

Textile Research Lab., Operations

A "elicker" or shearing machine is used to cut one-sixteenth inch thick asbestos paper. This operation is done two or three times per year and requires about 15-30 minutes. Handling of this material created only a minimal amount of dust.

Central Maintenance

Waronite insulation, manufactured by Johns-Manville, was cut on a band saw. Estimated time spent cutting asbestos was about fifteen minutes per week. An additional fifteen minutes is required to clean the area.

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To prevent environmental pollution, the operator does not use the building exhaust system when cutting asbestos material. Instead, a vacuum cleaner is used as a source of suction at the exhaust port on the saw. Immediately after cutting, the saw and the general area are cleaned with the vacuum cleaner and a brush. The operator wore a MSA Dustfree 77 respirator during both the cutting and cleanup operations.

In reviewing this entire operation with the precautions now taken, I don't think that there is an asbestos exposure problem. However, I believe that a few changes could further improve the situation. Some points to consider are:

- 1) Return to using the building exhaust. The frequency of cutting asbestos does not pose an environmental hazard. The vacuum cleaner can then be used to aid in controlling dust generated near the saw blade.
- 2) If item (1) is not acceptable, then consider placing a cloth or paper filter similar to those used in vacuum cleaners at the saw exhaust outlet. In this I am assuming that the velocity of air generated by the saw blade will aid in directing the dust into the filter. The vacuum cleaner now employed could then be used on top of the saw table to aid in controlling the dust generated near the blade.
- 3) Improve the enclosure around the blade in the section immediately below the table. But do so, only if the operation of the saw is not affected.
- 4) It would be advisable to have airborne concentrations of asbestos fibers determined when there are changes in established operating conditions or the frequency of use.

In summary, I don't feel that the present exposure to asbestos is a problem at the Chestnut Run location. At the first two locations mentioned, there was little or no dust generated and the length of exposure was very brief. The Central Maintenance work generates dust but exposure time is short. Also, the respiratory protection provided the workers meets the requirements of the OSHA.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY
RICHARD J. HUBBARD
Richard J. Hubbard
Industrial Hygienist

RHW/ash

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