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Asbestos

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Inter Office

Transmission and Chassis Division
General Office

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To: Engineering Managers
Industrial Relations Managers
Safety Engineers
Plant Physicians

cc: Plant Managers Mr. J. M. Poe
Mr. P. G. Gross Mr. R. S. Pomaroli
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Mr. E. M. Nelson

Subject: Utilization of Contractors to Effect the Removal of Asbestos
Associated with Renovation or Demolition

Whether the health risks associated with friable asbestos be real or perceived, no fabrication or construction material has the employee health hazard awareness as does asbestos. In recognition of the possible health risks and in response to public concern, the various regulatory agencies, i.e., OSHA, have placed very severe restrictions on work practices associated with intrusion into asbestos bearing materials.

It makes little difference whether or not you accept the premise that one significant exposure is sufficient to start the incubation of disease or believe that the event is more directly associated with individual susceptibility, we do know that the health community unquestionably accepts linkage between the inhalation of asbestos fibers and such lung disorders as asbestosis (pneumoconiosis) and mesothelioma (tumor).

Two recent T&C asbestos work situations demonstrated to our satisfaction that we are not equipped physically or emotionally to perform significant asbestos intrusion on an occasional basis. The cost and/or inconvenience associated with the utilization of specialized contractor is more than justified by the elimination of apparent employee health risks. Accordingly, it shall be T&C Division's safety policy to utilize a contractor to effect the removal of asbestos associated with renovation or demolition.

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The policy envisions the exercise of local judgment on a task to task basis for example:

It would not be practical to assume a contractor will be utilized to perform such tasks as removing the asbestos from a valve bonnet to effect an emergency gasket repair. All such decision should be based upon the understanding that all material suspected as containing asbestos shall be treated as it if were asbestos until proven otherwise. All asbestos removal shall be performed in accordance with the attached industrial hygiene instructions. Medical surveillance and record keeping on an employe work life basis is required. Continue to search for and discontinue the use of any maintenance or construction materials containing friable asbestos.

Included with this communication is a copy of seminar hand-out entitled "Asbestos Removal" prepared by the American Association of General Contractors in conjunction with the Michigan Department of Health. Although it is slanted towards the utilization of contractors, even a casual review provides a good understanding of the scope of the problem, the health risks and the detail of the control required in the planning and conduct of asbestos removal.

R. D. Byrom

Attachments . - .
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