

BULLETIN

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NIOSH--OSHA RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING
WORK PLACE EXPOSURE TO ASBESTOS

In a press conference held on April 17, 1980 some expected recommendations were announced to the media by a joint working group of individuals from NIOSH and OSHA. This press release was in most of the major papers last week.

Essentially, this release stated that NIOSH and OSHA were recommending that the work place exposure levels for asbestos be reduced from 2 fibers per cc TWA standard now in effect to 0.1 fibers per cc exposure level. As this was a press conference, the NIOSH--OSHA people are using the wording 100,000 fibers per cubic meter rather than the 0.1 fibers per cc which had been used earlier. This method of expressing fiber counts has been advocated by Dr. Selikoff and others in order to perhaps get larger headlines in the news media.

Dr. Robbins of NIOSH wrote a letter to Dr. Bingham of OSHA concerning its recommendations. Some may recall Dr. Robbins advocates the complete elimination of asbestos from the work place and all the environment.

Among the items stated in the press release and the reports are:
(1) There is no safe exposure level limit for asbestos. (2) All commercial and several non-commercial forms of asbestos cause disease.

They did not discuss any new information they had uncovered that supported their recommendation for reducing the exposure level from 2 fibers per cc to 0.1 fibers per cc. This is a most important move on the part of NIOSH and OSHA. They are suggesting that a new rule may be in place as soon as six months from the date of this press release.

This move by NIOSH--OSHA coupled with the cradle to grave control approach of the EPA would have overwhelming effects on our industry. Most of those who have worked with the occupational controls and requirements feel that a 0.1 fiber per cc TWA exposure level is the equivalent of no asbestos in the work place. This information on the press release and the statements by Dr. Robbins and Dr. Bingham are enclosed for your information.

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Executive Director

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