



The Industrial Commission
Of Ohio
Division Of Safety & Hygiene
246 N. High St., Col., O. 43215

October 15, 1981

Legal Section
Industrial Commission of Ohio
246 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

#741615
Violet Lamb
Fisher Body, GMC
Columbus, Ohio

Attn: Judy Spencer

Dear Ms Spencer:

On September 24, 1981, a visit was made by Robert Crackel to Fisher Body-GMC, 200 Georgesville Road, Columbus, Ohio 43228. The purpose was to collect industrial hygiene data relative to the occupational disease claim of Violet Lamb, claim 741615-22.

This plant manufactures hardware for automobile bodies. The claimant works as a secretary for the head of the chemical engineering department within the administrative section of the plant.

The claimant's respiratory impairment allegedly resulted from inhaling fumes emanating from another office which was being re-finished. According to the company, Wonder Wood Satin Interior Varnish was being used to refinish wood in that office (see attached Material Safety Data Sheet). Ms. Lamb's office is enclosed and some distance away from the refinished office, but all agreed that the varnish odor was perceptible.

Because the refinishing conditions could not be replicated, no testing could be done. However, some general observations can be made. None of the listed ingredients (mineral spirits, methyl isobutyl ketone and cyclohexanone) is a pulmonary sensitizer, i.e., none would cause an allergic asthmatic reaction as do small amounts of isocyanates in some individuals. Prolonged inhalation of the vapors, the effects of which would be additive, might trigger acute respiratory irritation. However, it is unlikely that the vapor concentrations from simple refinishing would surpass the threshold limit values in Ms Lamb's working area.

It should be noted that threshold limit values refer to airborne concentrations of substances and represent conditions under which it is believed that nearly all workers may be repeatedly exposed day after day without adverse effect. Because of wide variation in individual susceptibility, however, a small percentage of workers may experience discomfort from some substances at or below the threshold limit.

Other causes for the claimant's respiratory distress were ruled out. The company states that it uses no isocyanate-based paints and only a small amount of epoxy paint. Ms Lamb would not normally come into contact with this paint, as her workplace is far removed from the painting area. The claimant's supervisor routinely goes back and forth from the administrative offices to the laboratory. It is conceivable that he could carry trace amounts of pulmonary sensitizers on his clothing. Inspection of the laboratory revealed this to be unlikely.

It is unknown whether the claimant has had a history of asthma or respiratory distress. If so, even slight exposure to these vapors might well have aggravated the pre-existing condition.

In short, there seem to be three possible explanations for the claimant's illness. First, the concentration of the vapors in question, which are known respiratory irritants, may have in fact exceeded the accepted safe limits and caused her reaction. This seems improbable due to her distance from the process and the lack of effect on workers closer to the vapors. Secondly, even a small amount of the vapors may have aggravated a pre-existing asthmatic condition. Thirdly, the claimant may well be one of the few individuals who suffer genuinely ill effects to these vapors below the accepted threshold limit values.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert J. Crackel
Industrial Hygienist

RJC/gr

Attachment

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

I certify that the microphotographics on this roll of film or microfiche are true and accurate productions of records generated by or received by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, an agency of the State of Ohio, as required by Ohio Revised Code Section 4123.52 and Section 9.01 which require optimum protection from hazards of accidental destruction of records.

It is further certified that the photographic processes used for microfilming the above records were accomplished in a manner and on microfilm which meets the requirements of the National Bureau of Standards for permanent photographic copy.

William D. Kaye
Supervisor, Microfilming Unit

Date Filmed: 1-3-85

By: *John Frey*
(Camera Operator)

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