

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF

UNITED UNIONS BUILDING, 1750 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

OFFICE OF JOHN J. PECORARO, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATION • (202) 872-1444

GLAZING AND
GLASS WORKERS
SIGN PAINTERS AND
SCENIC ARTISTS
CARPENTERS AND JOINERS
PAINT MAKERS
and Allied Industrial Workers

February 12, 1974

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Dear Members:

7 Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of Mt. Sinai Hospital School of Medicine in New York has been cooperating with our Brotherhood in researching industrial-related diseases. He has informed us that, based on their research, there is now documentary evidence that polyvinyl chloride, used in some paint manufacturing processes, is the cause of a rare type of cancer.

? A test on some employees in a southern paint company indicated that four of the employees tested had angiosarcoma of the liver. This is a very rare type of cancer. These men worked in the portion of the plant that involved the use of polyvinyl chloride.

7 At the request of Dr. Selikoff, based on the above information and in cooperation with our National Painters' Conference, we are contacting those members who have worked or are working with polyvinyl chloride. (See attached questionnaire.) The questions are those suggested by Dr. Selikoff. Upon receipt and evaluation of the questions by Dr. Selikoff, I shall inform you of his analysis and the steps that will be taken.

Our Safety Committee Chairman, Painters' General Vice President Jack Cox, has approved a meeting of our Committee for some time in the latter part of March. At present, I am making the necessary arrangements and will notify you of the time and place.

Very truly,

John J. Pecoraro
Director of Legislation

Enc.

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MAR 04 1974

R. N. WHEELER, JR.

AFFILIATED WITH THE AFL-CIO, CIO, BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT, MARINE TRADES DEPARTMENT, METAL TRADES DEPARTMENT, WOOD & CARPENTRY DEPARTMENT, INDUSTRIAL UNION OF MARINE ENGINEERS, ETC.

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Traden, Al-O-Si has learned that there are
or are working with polyvinyl chloride
to a rare and fatal disease. This information was
received from Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of the Mt. Sinai
Hospital School of Medicine in New York. Dr. Selikoff
is a leading scientist in industrial-related diseases.
This information was gathered after extensive research.

We request that you complete this questionnaire and
return it as soon as possible to our Brotherhood office:
Attn: Mr. John Pecoraro, Director of Legislation
Painters & Allied Trades, United Nations Building
1750 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006

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1. How many paint manufacturing plants are signatory to your agreement? _____
 2. How many of your members are employed there? _____
 3. How many members (percentage) have worked or are working with polyvinyl chloride?
_____ (average) how long? _____
 4. Are there any members who have worked or are working with polyvinyl chloride who are now under a doctor's care?

 5. Please give their names and addresses.
IMPORTANT: Supply this information only if they give you permission to do so.

 6. Do any of the above mentioned members agree to be examined, at no cost to them, at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City? List names, addresses and telephone numbers:

Three Cancer Deaths May Be Job-Related, B.F. Goodrich Says

Former Employees at Louisville
Plant All Were Involved in
Polyvinyl Chloride Operation

By WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter
AKRON, Ohio — B. F. Goodrich Co., in a move that sent ripples through the plastics and chemicals industries, said it is investigating the possibility that the cancer deaths of three workers at a plant in Louisville, Ky., may be job-related.

Goodrich said that the workers affected were in its polyvinyl chloride operations, and that they died of angiosarcoma of the liver, a rare form of liver cancer.

Dr. Maurice N. Johnson, Goodrich's director of environmental health, said in the company's statement that he had recently received medical reports concerning the death of an employee in late December. "A review of medical records uncovered that two other employees had apparently died from the same cause—one in September 1971 and one in March 1973," the company said.

It was understood that a fourth death—in 1968—involving a more common form of liver cancer was considered outside the reasonable bounds of the "probability" of the three recent deaths, all attributed to angiosarcoma.

Goodrich said it had informed Kentucky health officials and the Federal National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health that the company was investigating the possibility that the deaths might be "related to occupational causes."

Dr. Johnson said the company is now sending a team of experts to Louisville to begin an investigation.

Dr. Marcus M. Key, director of NIOSH, said the institute also will start an effort to determine the extent of employment in the U.S. and in foreign countries with similar manufacturing processes. A spokesman for the institute said the best information available shows 21 deaths per year in the U.S. attributable to angiosarcoma.

The recent deaths at Louisville, according to Dr. Johnson of Goodrich, involved workers in the company's vinyl products operations. An official of NIOSH said he understood that the workers had an average of 25 years' exposure to various chemicals and agents involved in vinyl operations.

Goodrich said it has been conducting a program to reduce exposure to hydrocarbons, particularly vinyl chloride, throughout its operations. Further steps to limit exposure and to describe the situation to workers in vinyl products production are being taken, the company said.

Goodrich also said it is providing medical examinations to all employees involved in any phase of vinyl chloride or polyvinyl chloride production, and is reviewing all the medical records of former or retired employees.

About 1,200 persons work at the Louisville plant, of whom about 270 are involved in vinyl products operations.

"Dropping of a Bomb"

Word that the deaths might be job-related spread quickly throughout several industries. Said Louis Decker, an industrial hygienist on the staff of the United Rubber Workers union, which has many members involved in vinyl operations at various companies: "It is the dropping of a bomb. It creates the possibility of a whole new occupational disease."

that they died of angiosarcoma of the liver, a rare form of liver cancer.

Mr. Decker said he suspected there might be a connection between the Goodrich problems at the Louisville plant and the problems of Borden Inc. at a vinyl-materials plant in Columbus, Ohio. Workers at the Borden plant in several months have complained of a variety of ailments, some believed crippling, which they allege are connected with working conditions.

Rudolph Kaelin, president of the Synthetic Rubber Workers unit representing the Kentucky plant's workers, said some of his coworkers "have been concerned for quite a while" about the possibility of cancer. "With these men dying of it, it makes you wonder," Mr. Kaelin says he has worked with vinyl products for about 15 years; he has been a Goodrich employee for 23 years.

A medical expert at NIOSH, however, said he doubted the difficulties at the two plants were related. He asserted that the problems at the Borden plant had been defined as peripheral neuropathy, a disease that attacks nerves that control muscles in human limbs. The liver afflictions at the Goodrich plant seem unrelated to the problems at Borden, he said.

Goodrich has four other plants and offices: Plants at Akron, Ohio; St. Louis, Mo.; Long Beach, Calif.; and Haverly, Ill.

VC mic

February 28, 1974

Mr. Nick Wheeler
Union Carbide

Attached please find the
information I mentioned
in my telephone conversation
with you on this date.

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MAR 04 1974

R. N. WHEELER, JR.

ZEB G. BELL, Jr.

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