

FILE NAME: Sprayed Asbestos (SPRA)

DATE: 1949 June 29

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Dept of National Health & Welfare from the Minister of Health RE Dangers in the Application of Insulating Material in Ships



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

1570, ST. HUBERT ST., MONTREAL, QUE.

June 29, 1949.

Dr. K.C. Charron, Chief,
Industrial Health Division,
Department of National Health & Welfare,
714 Jackson Building,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Dr. Charron,

Your letter of June the 14th, 1949, addressed to Dr. F.J. Tourangeau, requesting informations about the dangers involved in the application of insulating material in ships, was referred to me yesterday.

I have never had the opportunity of seeing this type of work done, but from your description of it, I could get in touch with the concern which is the sole representative here in Canada for this insulating method and here is what we gather from the informations obtained.

This mode of application of asbestos insulation is known as the "Sprayed Limpet Asbestos" process and the Atlas Asbestos Company Limited is the only licensed concern in Canada for its application. On the west coast however, they have sublicenced another company permitting its use. This process has been patented in England and it is being applied here in Canada since 1935 approximately.

The application of the insulating layer is done according to the description given in your letter, that is, asbestos fiber is sprayed from a pressure pipe and mixed with a spray of water at a distance of 8 to 12 inches after it leaves this pipe. This wetting permits adhesion to the surface on which the insulation is applied.

The asbestos fiber used is very long, this is why it is necessary to shred it in a machine which resembles a small carding machine. To obtain better cohesion Portland cement is also added to the asbestos. This quantity of Portland cement, though small compared to the amount of asbestos, is intended to enrobe or cover the asbestos fiber so that in contact with the water, it will cement the asbestos fibers to produce the insulating layer. South African asbestos is used for thick insulation.

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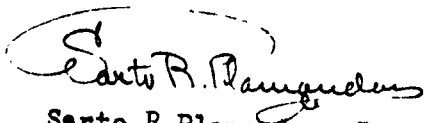
When it is necessary to obtain a better finish of a surface on which paint is to be applied, a better grade of Quebec asbestosis is used under the form of a thick slurry which is applied with a spraying gun in a manner similar to the application of paint.

Though I have not seen the process under actual application, a thing I will do as soon as a job will be done in the region of Montreal, I would be inclined to doubt that the actual exposure to asbestos is important enough to produce asbestosis.

- a) The asbestos fiber used is very long $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, which would mean that if fiber floats in the air it must be very long.
- b) Most of the dust present in the atmosphere could be cement dust. As mentioned before, cement is added dry to the dry asbestos, and shredded with it so that it will cover and stick to the asbestos fibers. When this mixture is projected from the spraying pipe, the air stream can sweep off some of the cement adhering to the surface of the asbestos fiber before the fibers reach the water spray which is shot at an angle to meet the fiber spray.
- c) From the company's official, we are informed that they have never had any claim regarding asbestosis here in Canada.

These are the informations which we can give you. It is our intention to investigate further into this question, and we will let you know about our findings when more precise data are obtained.

Yours very truly,


Sarto R. Plamondon, P.Eng.,
Sanitary Engineer.

Approved,


Director.

SRP/FLL

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Ottawa, Ont.,
July 12th, 1949.

W.S. Thomson, Esq.,
Industrial Hygiene Department,
Workmen's Compensation Board,
411 Denman St.,
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Mr. Thomson:

Reference your letter of May 30th, concerning a case of asbestosis which developed in a worker applying insulating material to ships, as far as we have been able to ascertain, this is the first case of asbestosis which has been reported following this particular occupational exposure.

Apparently the same process is being used in the Province of Quebec but to date no case of asbestosis has been reported. However, the Quebec Division of Industrial Hygiene will investigate the process and let us know if they consider it to be hazardous.

Yours very truly,

K.C. Charron, M.D.,
Chief, Industrial Health Division.

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