

Local Union 455, West Haven, Connecticut, Initiates Asbestos Training Program

General Secretary-Treasurer Arthur E. Coia announces with great pride the successful establishment of an Asbestos Removal Training Program by Laborers' Local 455, West Haven, Connecticut.

Asbestiosis, a lung disease caused by the inhalation of asbestos fibers, has long been known to medicine. Many unions, including our own, have issued cautionary warnings to their members and affiliates on the use of respirators and other safety devices when working with asbestos materials. A few years ago, however, it was discovered that asbestos fibers reached into the air from installed insulation. This has been held to create significant dangers for office workers and others in buildings where asbestos is the major insulation material.

Shortly after the dangers of installed asbestos were discovered, it was found that 90% of the school buildings in the United States had been built with asbestos insulation. Since asbestiosis is a cumulative disease, that is, the worst cases result from early and extended exposure. This danger to school children represented a future problem of major magnitude. An asbestos removal program for the public schools was included as a subsidy program in federal legislation and a gigantic effort is going forward to remove or contain the asbestos danger in American schools.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has developed a certification program for workmen involved in the "encapsulation" of installed asbestos.

Business Manager Anthony Inorio of Local 455 has negotiated a collective bargaining agreement with contractors involved in this work and instituted a training program at the local union hall that educated 64 laborers for OSHA certification in the skills necessary to perform the work involved in asbestos encapsulation.

General Secretary-Treasurer Coia extended his congratulations to Business Manager Inorio and the members of Local Union 455 for "this evidence of their deep concern for the health and welfare of the children of their community as well as for the safety of their members."



Business Manager Anthony Inorio (c.) holds respirator that will be used in training Laborers' Local 455 members in asbestos removal. Also at training site are Steward Curt Jones (l.) and Sonny Abate, the General Contractor Superintendent.



Steward Curt Jones, (l.), Laborers' Local No. 455, West Haven, Connecticut, and his brother member Lewis Cascagna, prepare the area prior to encapsulation.