



AOMA Report

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AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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OLD ASSOCIATION TAKES NEW NAME!

The AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION is the new name of the former Industrial Medical Association. The membership of the Association voted the name change at its annual business meeting held in Bal Harbour, Fla., May 1. The new name reflects the broader field of activity in which its members are engaged, and designates the organization as one national in scope, according to C. Craig Wright, M.D., Manager of Health Services and Medical Director for Xerox Corporation, Rochester, N.Y., who took office at the meeting as the organization's new President.

While the Association has members in 35 countries outside the North American continent, it is primarily an American organization, he said, and added that its members are practitioners of medicine as it relates to the health of workers -- not only in industry, but in many other areas such as schools, hospitals, stores, banks, police and fire departments, insurance and transportation companies, etc.

The Association was organized in 1916 as the American Association of Industrial Physicians and Surgeons, the name by which it was known for 35 years. In 1951 the name was changed to Industrial Medical Association, which was its title for 23 more years until the present change.

SET JUNE 25 FOR HEARING ON PROPOSED PERMANENT STANDARD FOR VINYL CHLORIDE

What is to be done about vinyl chloride? The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has scheduled an informal hearing to begin on June 25 at 9:30 a.m. in Washington, D.C. to hear data, views and arguments concerning its proposed permanent standard of "no detectable level" which was published in the Federal Register on May 10. Whether a standard this restrictive is necessary will be debated, and the outcome is crucial. The chemical and plastics industry questions whether it can survive under these conditions. While similar arguments were heard with regard to the permanent standards for 14 carcinogens which became effective February 11, the current situation is considerably more grave in view of the present production of vinyl chloride which exceeds seven billion pounds per year.

It is interesting to note that the British consider operating with vinyl chloride at less than 5 ppm as inconceivable. According to an article in the May 27 issue of Chemical and Engineering News, the Chairman of the U.K.'s Chemical Industries Association's special committee on vinyl chloride said "the ultimate (vinyl chloride level) for most existing plants is 10 ppm. New plants with the most modern technology might achieve 5 ppm." He added that amounts below this "are not conceivable."

Meanwhile OSHA showed its concern about the problem by publishing on April 24 a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on vinyl chloride. OSHA requested pertinent information be filed by May 17. It would be interesting to know how much pertinent data were

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received in the three weeks and two days allowed for submission.

There will be no disagreement among those appearing at the hearing that the protection of workers' health is the primary goal of all concerned, but to what degree vinyl chloride must be controlled to assure no harm to workers is a matter on which scientists can not agree based on the limited information now available. Another question which will have to be resolved about vinyl chloride is whether material that might contain some (less than one-tenth of one percent?) of the vinyl chloride monomer would have to be labeled "cancer suspect." If so, the safeguards required would apply to the fabrication manufacturer of polyvinyl chloride products. Also of considerable import on the whole question is the toxicity of polyvinyl chloride. Disturbing reports from Europe indicate that it may be carcinogenic and/or a pneumoconiosis agent. This too, will undoubtedly be brought up at the hearing. The decisions reached will have great import to the chemical industry as a whole, not just to the manufacturers and fabricators of vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride. Any person desiring to participate at the hearing must file a notice of intention to appear with Ms. Joanne Goodell, Attn: Docket OSH-36, OSHA, 1726 M St., NW, Rm. 200, Washington, D.C., no later than June 17, 1974.

The proposed permanent standard of "no detectable level" was published only about a month following promulgation of the Emergency Temporary Standard of 50 ppm. It was based on information and data presented April 15 to representatives of OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Health and the Environmental Protection Agency by the Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories of Northbrook, Ill., concerning results of animal exposure studies with VC (see IMA Report, May, 1974) which indicate that exposure to VC at 50 ppm may well constitute a serious health hazard to employees.

The "no detectable level" of the proposed standard is to be determined by a sampling and analytical method capable of detecting vinyl chloride at concentrations of 1 ppm with an accuracy of $1 \text{ ppm} \pm 50 \text{ percent}$. This is the method recommended to OSHA by NIOSH. Further requirements under the proposed standard call for (1) regulation of areas where vinyl chloride is manufactured, reacted, stored, handled, released, repackaged or used including operations with polyvinyl chloride containing detectable levels of vinyl chloride; (2) a program of monitoring to establish whether there are detectable levels in regulated areas and to permit determination of employee exposures on an individual basis; (3) instigation of two programs where detectable levels of vinyl chloride are monitored -- an engineering and work practice program to reduce levels below detectability and a simultaneous respiratory protection program for employees in the regulated area; (4) the provision and use of protective clothing for employees in regulated areas; (5) written operational and emergency plans; and (6) comprehensive requirements for employee medical examination. The medical requirements as recommended to OSHA by NIOSH (see IMA Report, May, 1974) were incorporated in the proposed standard with some alterations to include additional guidance for the physician.

BLS REPORTS ON 1972 SURVEY OF OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

Occupational illnesses accounted for 4 percent of the nearly 5.7 million recordable work related injuries and illnesses which occurred during 1972 in private non-farm industries (other than railroads, coal, metal and non-metal mining). Of the total number of occupational injuries and illnesses, 5,500 were fatal -- 6 percent due to illness. These figures are part of the Bureau of Labor Statistics final estimates for the year, 1972 which were released last month. In the industries surveyed, the incidence rate of 10.9 indicates that, on the average one out of every 10 workers experienced a job-related injury or illness. Other key findings from the survey include:

(1) the highest incidence rates were generally concentrated in units of 100-249 employees with the least incidence in units of less than 50 or more than 1,000 employees; (2) only about 3 in 10 cases of work-related injuries and illnesses resulted in the loss of a workday; (3) about 24.7 million workdays were lost during the year; (4) an estimated 3 out of 10 establishments had at least one recordable occupational injury or illness; manufacturing industries accounted for more than 50 percent of all recordable cases (nearly 2.9 million) while constituting less than one-third of the employment.

The 1972 survey covered the first full year of recordkeeping under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and will, therefore, serve as the base for comparison with results of future surveys. Although the BLS published estimates for 1971, the 1971 survey should not be compared with later years because it covered only 6-months and may not have reflected possible seasonal patterns. Also, the last half of 1971 marked the first period for employer recordkeeping and some confusion over interpretation of definitions occurred.

NIOSH ANNOUNCES PUBLICATION OF COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE MANUAL

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health announces the publication of the third edition of its comprehensive industrial hygiene manual "The Industrial Environment--its Evaluation and Control." In 1958, the Public Health Service's Occupational Health Program introduced the Syllabus as a compilation of training aids in conjunction with courses presented by the Service to industrial hygiene personnel. This third edition, which is more of a textbook than a syllabus, is the most comprehensive to date. Subject matter of the first few chapters covers mathematics, chemistry, biochemistry, physiology and toxicology. Other chapters deal with specific areas of interest to those concerned with evaluating the potentially harmful effects of physical and chemical air contaminants. New chapters have been added on safety, solid waste, and control of water pollution.

Authors of chapters in this edition who were selected for their expertise in a particular subject matter, include 15 representatives from universities, 19 from industry, 12 from the consulting field and several from State agencies and technical societies. Copies of the 719 page, hard bound, volume are available at \$11.70 a copy from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. GPO stock number is 1701-00396.

STENDER SAYS SAFETY PROFESSIONALS NOT BEING DOWNGRADED

In reply to charges by the American Society of Safety Engineers (see IMA Report, May, 1974) that safety professionals are being stripped of authority and downgraded by OSHA, John H. Stender, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, said in a speech given at the Western New York Safety Conference on May 16 that the Office of Standards is being reorganized to make it more responsive to developing new standards, but he says "no one in the Office of Standards has been fired or lost any pay." He indicated that supervisory authority has been suspended pending completion of the reorganization, but added that this is basic to the reorganization. He continued, "I think it is important to explain why the reorganization is taking place. The initial mission of OSHA's Office of Standards was to put together a package of standards based on national consensus standards, and to refine, improve, and index them. Now that this first phase of OSHA's standards development is largely completed, a restructuring of the Office of Standards is taking place so that more manpower and technical expertise can be brought to bear on the challenge of new standards development. When the reorganization is complete, we will be able to speed the review of NIOSH criteria documents, weigh more carefully

the comments received from the public, and increase the total number of new standards developed each year."

VINYL CHLORIDE MAY HAVE CARCINOGENIC POTENTIAL BEYOND ANGIOSARCOMA OF THE LIVER

The overall death rates of vinyl chloride workers are no greater than those experienced by other U.S. industrial populations, according to findings of a just-completed ten-month survey conducted by Tabershaw-Cooper Associates, Inc., for the Manufacturing Chemists Association on behalf of vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride producers. The study indentified 8,384 past and present employees of the VC/PVC industry and determined the vital status of 7,128. Among these, 352 deaths had occurred during the period under study and death certificates were obtained on 328. Analysis of the data indicates dose-related increases in the incidence of cancers in the longer-exposed workers, as compared with their counterparts who had worked for shorter periods in jobs exposing them to vinyl chloride. But the important tentative finding, according to Dr. Irving R. Tabershaw, is that there may be a carcinogenic potential beyond angiosarcoma of the liver. "We demonstrated that there was a slight increase in cancer of the lung, the lymphatic system, and possibly of the brain, as well as the liver," he said, and added "there is also a group called 'other and unspecified sites' which seems to have an increase, but we don't know what that means as yet."

FIBROUS GLASS SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 27

The health effects of prolonged exposure to fibrous glass will be the subject of a national symposium to be held at the University of Maryland, College Park, Md., June 26-27, under the sponsorship of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Papers will be presented by a host of authorities from U.S. industry and academia and speakers from England, Wales and Scotland. Registration information may be obtained from Mrs. Susan Stob, Conference Coordinator, Conferences and Institutes Division, University College, University of Maryland, College Park, Md. 20742. Telephone: (301) 454-5237.

CIRCULAR AVAILABLE ON XVIII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

An information circular presenting pertinent details regarding the XVIII International Congress on Occupational Health to be held in Brighton, England, Sept. 14-19, 1975, has just been published. To receive a copy, address requests to: Conference Services, Ltd., 43 Charles Street, Mayfair, London W1X 7PB, England.

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