

RVC said handling asbestos properly

ALBANY — As Rondout Valley High School doors closed today to allow workers to spray ceiling asbestos tiles with fixative, an official of the New York State Department of Health maintained that air contamination from the tiles is not a hazardous public health problem.

"There is no evidence that it poses an acute problem, and I think it is being handled in appropriate fashion," said Dr. Nicholas Vianna of the department's Bureau of Food and Institutional Sanitation.

Rondout Valley High School will remain closed Friday to allow a New Jersey firm, KRC-Associates, to spray about 55,000 square feet of ceilings with a clear polymer coating they developed especially for the purpose. The spray reacts chemically with asbestos molecules to form a tough surface coating that prevents flaking when the material begins to disintegrate.

Rondout Superintendent Dr. James O'Connell had ceiling materials tested after hearing a televised report of a school closing in New Jersey for asbestos particle contamination.

Tests showed a concentration of .15 to .17 asbestos fibers per milliliter of air at the high school. O'Connell said that the Environmental Protection Agency suggested minimum is no more than .1 fibers per-milliliter, while the Bureau of Labor recommends not more than .5 per milliliter.

New York State has no minimum standard for contamination by asbestos particles, Dr. Vianna said. "Our only experience has been with people such as asbestos miners, industrial workers, and pipelitters, workers who inhale large amounts of asbestos," he said. "Regarding minimal amounts in the air, it remains to be seen."

Repeated exposure in large amounts over long periods of time can cause chronic diseases, including cancer, he said. Asked for his definition of a long time, he replied: "Something like 15 or 20 years."

The Ulster County Department of Health does not

have any minimum air contamination standards for asbestos. A spokesman referred inquiries to state officials.

A survey of Ulster County school administrators disclosed that all were aware of the problem and that all had checked up on their own districts after Dr. James O'Connell, the Rondout Valley superintendent of schools, disclosed his district's plans at a superintendent's conference last week.

Robert McCarthy, the New Paltz superintendent, said that about 14,000 square feet of ceiling tiles in the middle school contained asbestos. He hired Rossnagel and Associates of Cherry Hill, N.J. to conduct tests which were scheduled to begin today. "Results of air contamination measurements will be available early next week and appropriate action will be taken if indicated," McCarthy said.

Louis A. Salzmann, Kingston superintendent, said district buildings had been checked after hearing televised reports of a school closing in New Jersey. Only two boiler room ceilings in the entire district contain asbestos, he said.

Saugerties Superintendent Daniel Lee said that David Hildebrand, superintendent of buildings and grounds, had been made aware of the problem about three years ago and had checked out all district buildings. All tests were negative and there are no asbestos materials in any of the buildings, Lee said.

Dr. Jack Keough, Onteora business manager, said the district had also hired Rossnagel and Associates to do a series of tests. The final test, to determine if deterioration and flaking of the asbestos has occurred, is set for next Wednesday.

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

UC-1958

OSHA List Released

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released a tentative list of chemicals for possible regulation under the mechanism for regulating cancer hazards in the workplace which it proposed in October, 1977.

The list was compiled for OSHA by Clement Associates, Inc. of Washington, D.C., which reviewed and categorized the 2,000 chemicals identified as suspect carcinogens by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Chemical substances included on the OSHA list appear to meet OSHA's criteria for Category I, II and III substances.

In issuing the list, OSHA's Director of Health Standards Programs, Grover Wrenn, noted, "I would like to emphasize that the final regulation issued from this rulemaking may contain somewhat different criteria for classifying Category I, II, or III toxic substances as carcinogens." Wrenn also pointed out that OSHA has not yet scientifically examined the list and that continuing review might result in substances being added or deleted from the list.

Wrenn encouraged all participants in the policy proceeding to include in their written submissions a list of priorities for regulation of these substances, as well as an explanation of the criteria they would use.