

FILE NAME: RT Vanderbilt (RTV)

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter to Bondex International from Arthur Rohl Writing a Response from Dr. Selikoff RE Asbestos Content of a Sample of Metro



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Department of Community Medicine

September 16, 1975

Mr. Julius K. Nemeth
Bondex International, Inc.
Brunswick, Ohio 44212

Dear Mr. Nemeth:

Dr. Selikoff has asked me to respond to your inquiry of September 5 regarding the asbestos content of a sample of Metro. The sample in question was a 1 lb. box of spackling compound for interior wall repair, which I purchased at a hardware store in New York City in January 1974. Fifteen samples of other consumer spackling compounds were also purchased and analyzed by optical microscopy, x-ray diffraction and transmission electron microscopy. The results of these analyses showed that the Metro contained plaster of Paris, talc, tremolite and quartz. Tremolite is an asbestos mineral and it comprised from about 4 to 6% of the Metro sample. You have pointed out that the Metro formula does not call for the addition of asbestos but you may have overlooked the fact that many talc deposits contain tremolite. When the talc is mined and processed the tremolite is carried over into the final product.

The report on spackling compounds was published in the journal Science on August 15. It did not give product names, although subsequent news articles did, in some cases. I will send you a reprint of the Science article when it becomes available. If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Arthur N. Rohl'.

Arthur N. Rohl, Ph.D.
Environmental Sciences Laboratory

ANR:sl

cc: Dr. I.J. Selikoff