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FEB 11 1974

PUBLIC RELATIONS

SPECIAL SECTION -- LOUISVILLE SITUATION

PM EDITION

EXECUTIVE NEWS DIGEST

This special section contains all press
clippings and media releases received
during the past 24-hours on the Louisville
situation.

External Communications
and Public Affairs

20206001

BFG02360

PLASTICS CORNER

BFG ADOPTS ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AT LOUISVILLE FACILITY

Additional precautionary measures to guard the health of employees in the vinyl chloride and PVC operations at its Louisville, Ky., plant have been reported by B.F. Goodrich Co. in Akron, Ohio.

Simultaneously, the Manufacturing Chemical Association (MCA) in Washington has announced that it has stopped circulation of the 1972 chemical safety data sheet SD-56, as a result of Goodrich's report that the Louisville plant had experienced four fatal cases of angiosarcoma (a form of cancer) of the liver. MCA said that one of its groups, representing companies making vinyl chloride monomer and PVC resins, has been conducting exposure tests with animals, as a result of the report by Dr. P. L. Viola in Italy that long-term massive exposures of rats to vinyl chloride vapors had produced malignant tumors of a kind not found in men.

"In its 1972 revision of the data sheet, MCA called attention to the report, but added that carcinogenicity (cancer-causing) to humans had not been observed. The Goodrich experience now questions the validity of the latter statement. A revision edition of the vinyl chloride data sheet is planned after this question has been resolved."

Goodrich said that measures being taken at Louisville include those of its own initiative, plus some recommendations by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). They involve broad categories, such as preliminary work practices, general

(more)

housekeeping procedures, protective clothing, showers for PVC employees after work turns, monitoring of plant and personnel, and respiratory protection for designated employees.

Review of the NIOSH recommendations indicates that a majority... are already in effect or being implemented. Several require evaluating and ordering additional equipment. Some of the suggested procedures necessitate further review and clarification with NIOSH," Goodrich said.

A letter from Dr. Marcus M. Key, director of NIOSH and assistant surgeon general of the United States commended the "B.F. Goodrich Co. for their excellent cooperation with the survey team in providing access to company employees, union representatives and company records of medical and employment history significance. The agreement of officials of the Louisville facility to provide continued cooperation...demonstrates the significance of past and present conditions of employment which may have either precipitated or initiated the introduction of tumors in certain of its employees."

20206003

BFG02362

2 chemicals suspected as cause of rare form of fatal cancer

By John Nussbaum

Vinyl chloride and polychlorinated biphenyls, synthetic chemicals used in a variety of manufacturing processes, are suspected culprits in three fatal cases of a rare form of cancer.

The chemicals are the subject of intense investigations by the B. F. Goodrich Co., the United Rubber Workers and the International Chemical Workers Unions, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The investigations began when Goodrich on Jan. 22 reported it was examining all employees involved in producing and handling the chemicals to determine whether three deaths from hemangiosarcoma (cancer of the blood vessels) of the liver were job-related.

The deaths occurred in December 1973, March 1973 and September 1971 in Goodrich's plant in Louisville, Ky. The URW says another 1968 cancer death may stem from the same cause.

The reason the cases in

one plant drew attention is that only about 21 cases a year are reported in the United States, according to the chemical union. The union has asked its 90,000 members in the United States and Canada to furnish data they may have about the use and effects of the chemicals.

Investigation of the chemicals, and possible regulatory government action, will be coordinated at a meeting Tuesday in the Sheraton Hopkins International Airport.

The conference will include Dr. Irving Selikoff, a New York occupational health expert; Peter Bommarito, president of the URW and chairman of the health and welfare division of the AFL-CIO industrial union, and representatives of the unions, government health agencies and the public health, schools of Harvard University and the University of North Carolina. The two universities conduct the URW's occupational health program.

The unions and Goodrich had met with Dr. Selikoff's staff at New York's Mount Sinai Hospital Jan. 30 and in

Washington last week, according to a URW spokesman. Another meeting is scheduled Friday in Washington. The U. S. Labor Department may be asked to set emergency standards for the chemicals during the investigation.

The government recently issued standards for 14 chemicals discovered to cause cancer, but vinyl chloride and polychlorinated biphenyls were not included.

Dr. Selikoff figured prominently in research leading to the identification of the 14 chemicals. He also was instrumental in the identification in recent years of asbestosis, a lung disease, as an occupational disease of asbestos workers.

Louis Beliczky, the chemical workers union's director of industrial hygiene, said chemical-related cancer "usually has a latency of up to 20 years." Since the use of vinyl is relatively recent, he said it is possible the cases of liver cancer discovered so far may be the first of several more.

If the chemicals are found to be the cause, safeguards could be established to protect potential victims.

20206004

BFG02363

Emergency session to study standards for vinyl chloride

By DENNIS POLITE

Louisville Times Staff Writer

The standards board of the state Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will meet in emergency session Feb. 19 to revise its standard for vinyl chloride and to place the chemical on a list of cancer-causing agents.

The meeting, which will be open to the public, is the first emergency meeting ever called by the 13-member board.

Dr. J. Bradford Block, medical consultant to the state Department of Labor, said the board would probably accept his recommendation that the standard for vinyl chloride vapors be moved from 500 parts per million parts of air to 50 parts per million parts of air.

Block said the meeting has been called by James Yocom, commissioner of labor after a request from Gov. Wendell Ford, based on the results of an investigation of the situation by a medical consultant group to the state Department of Labor.

Dr. Block said in a telephone interview today that the change in standards comes as a direct result of a situation at the B. F. Goodrich Co. chemical plant in Louisville.

Four men who worked at the plant have apparently died of a rare liver can-

cer thought to be caused by exposure to vinyl chloride vapors.

The company announced last month that it was conducting an investigation into the use and effects of the chemical after two men who worked at the Louisville plant died last year of angiosarcoma, the liver cancer.

Another man died of the same cause in 1971; and the cause of death of a worker who died in 1968 has also been tentatively attributed to angiosarcoma.

The investigation has been joined by state and federal medical and safety officials and also has sparked an industry review of the situation.

Block said the company's standard is presently at 50 parts per million, about a tenth of the state standard of 500 parts per million.

If adopted, the standard would be the lowest concentration allowed in the nation, Block said.

He said the addition of vinyl chloride to the list of carcinogens would mean that all companies using the chemical would have to register with the state.

A new regulation slated to go into effect soon requires companies using 14 other identified cancer-causing agents to register such use with the state labor department, and also detail procedures surrounding the use of the chemical and the safeguards taken to protect workers from exposure.

Block said of 55 men now working at the B. F. Goodrich plant here whose blood tests showed some signs of liver abnormalities, half of them will be tested further because there are still signs of abnormalities from unknown causes.

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