FILE NAME: Friction Materials Standards Institute (FMS)

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo from Raybestos-Manhattan, John H. Marsh to R.R. Moalli RE Visit with Dr. Selikoff & a Request for Publishing Work Practice Guidelines with the Awareness of the Danger of Even Small Levels of Airborne Asbestos

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT AB-34

INTER ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATION

Raybestos Manhattan

Corporate DIVISION and Trumbull LOCATION

TO: Mr. R. R. Moalli

January 11, 1978

On January 5th Ike Weaver and I met with Drs. Selikoff and Nicholson at the Mt. Sinai Hospital to discuss the Mt. Sinai contract from NIOSH for "Investigation of Health Hazards in Brake Lining Repair and Maintenance Workers Occupationally Exposed to Asbestos". Also present were representatives from Bendix, Abex, Johns-Manville, NIOSH, District Council 37, State County and Municipal workers and the American Tobacco Institute.

The contract, which was issued June 30, 1977 and requires completion July 29, 1978, outlines three tasks:

I. A general historical characterization of the brake lining repair workers environment with reference to materials used in brake linings from 1940 to 1970.

II. Feasibility study for retrospective mortality study.

III. Medical Survey.

Detailed industrial hygiene assessment of worker exposure had been documented in two papers by Mt. Sinai personnel published in 1976 covering exposure at franchised auto dealer garages, at taxi fleet repair shops and a municipal truck repair shop, all located in New York City. Improper work practices, i.e., blowing out of drums with compressed air and grinding without exhaust ventilation were apparently standard procedure at all locations. Working conditions in municipal garages, as described by the union representative, were appallingly bad.

The workers chosen for the medical survey apparently will be drawn from the ranks of employees of the municipal union, and thus will be representative of exposure under the worst possible conditions.

Secondly, the study will again raise the question of the hazard potential of very small fibers. The 1976 paper by Rohl et al "Asbestos Exposure During Brake Lining Maintenance and Repair" contains the following comment on page 120:

> "In the 10 brake drum dust samples examined, it was found that asbestos fibers shorter than 4 microns predominated. The OSHA asbestos standard does not

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> require that short fibers (less than 5 microns in length) be counted or controlled. This oversight may have considerable biological significance in that small chrysotile fibers readily produce asbestos disease."

The statement is followed by references to seven studies, concerning exposure to short fibers, published between 1964 and 1975 without mentioning that they were all animal studies and that there is no proof that such exposure is hazardous to humans. Those at the meeting last Thursday will recall that, when questioned, Dr. Nicholson was unable to document any cases of mesothelioma among brake service mechanics in the United States.

It is of interest that NIOSH industrial hygiene surveys of brake service garages has shown mechanics mean daily TWA exposure to range between 0.5 and 0.19 fibers/cc as determined by optical microscopy. Field surveys conducted by Raybestos-Manhattan have given similar results except where friction materials were machined without exhaust ventilation.

The Rohl et al report commented as follows on conditions in New York City garages:

> "It was generally found that there was minimal, if any, effort to control dust in most garages. Workmen do not use respiratory protection. There was little awareness of the potential hazard of brake dust."

In recent surveys, the California Health Department has found airborne asbestos concentrations as high as 80 fpcc where heavy duty materials are machined without exhaust ventilation.

An educational campaign is clearly needed for both manufacturers and customers. I suggest the Friction Materials Standard Institute could perform a most important service for the industry by publishing work practice guidelines for brake service mechanics and others involved in the field processing of asbestos containing friction materials. Ike Weaver will bring the matter up at a meeting of the FMSI Asbestos Study Committee on January 19th and suggest a committee be appointed to take on this assignment.

Your comments would be appreciated.

John H. Marsh

/as

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