

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE IS YOUR BUSINESS TOO!

H. S. Weber - Chief Industrial Hygienist



An industrial hygienist is a latrine inspector and an industrial nurse is a menial with ambition! These misconceptions arise from a lack of knowledge of the work of the two professions. This is quite understandable and I dare say that many of our nurses here do not have a clear idea of the work of the industrial hygiene dept. Since industrial hygiene is your business too, it is important that one be aware of the scope of our program. To this end I will try to explain something about it.

There was a time in our company when the safety and hygiene people operated without positive mutual cooperation. Each group went about its own affairs with the tacit understanding that an unsafe condition was none of the hygiene department's business and that a hazard to health was none of the safety department's business. This arrangement patently does not make for the greatest return on the company's investment in these programs.

Sometime ago in New York, this fact was realized and it was decided that safety and hygiene is everybody's business. As a result the hygiene department is uncovering and reporting unsafe acts or conditions observed during our plant surveys. On the other hand safety people are reporting to us any dusty or unhealthful conditions noted by them. In addition, where there is a plant safety man, all ventilating systems are checked by him weekly. Since we of the hygiene department cannot be in every plant once a week, it is readily seen how this cooperation makes our health program more effective. Now, damaged dust piping, burned out ventilators, etc., do not go unnoticed or unrepaired for a very long period. Where exposures are to rapidly toxic substances such as solvents, lead, beryllium, and tellurium the preventive strength of this program is apparent. This would not be possible without the help of the safety people.

On the other hand, our work takes us into out-of-the-way places in the plant, such as shakeout pits, dust collectors, crane cabs, etc., and keeps us in the plant sometimes around the clock. Because of this, we have found many unsafe acts, and conditions especially during the night shifts that hitherto went unnoticed. This has reinforced the safety arm.

The hygiene department is making an effort to attend as many safety meetings as possible in order to carry the message of industrial hygiene to our people.

The Brake Shoe News is reinforcing our program with informative articles on medical, hygiene, safety and nursing.

The purchasing department is cooperating with us by listing only approved personal protective equipment and supplies for purchase. They check with us on the merits of dust collectors, vacuum systems, etc., from an industrial hygiene viewpoint so that least-price is