

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO J. H. Walton
AT 1586 KB

DATE August 8, 1972

FROM A. J. Frommershausen

COPIES TO D. R. Canham J. W. Gregg
J. D. Cassidy J. P. Hughes, M.D.
P. J. Franklin E. H. Schaper

AT 2675 OB

SUBJECT St. Helens - Industrial Hygiene Survey

On August 3, a visit was made to the St. Helens wallboard plant, to make an assessment of the asbestos handling and to update the previous noise survey.

The new Federal Asbestos Standard was discussed thoroughly with Jay and Jack, and suggestions were made on handling broken bags, cleaning up spills, disposing of empty bags, and the respirator program. According to Ted Baldwin of Permanente, bagged asbestos is now available in plastic encapsulated pallets. Besides preventing broken bags and spills, the plastic can be used for empty bag disposal. Jack has been advised and is looking into the matter for St. Helens.

It is anticipated that the plant will be using asbestos during the week of August 21, and I plan to sample for asbestos and evaluate the ventilation system during this time.

Doctor Stewart appears to be handling the plant medical problems satisfactorily. He also can do the asbestos examinations, including pulmonary function tests, whenever we work out the details later this year.

A visit was made to the hospital to meet Mr. Lung, who does the audiometric tests. Mr. Lung is exceptionally well qualified in audiometry, and also in pulmonary function testing and as an x-ray technician.

Noise levels at the plant are essentially unchanged from my initial survey in May 1971.

The following values were obtained on the new #4 line:

Re-trim	88 dBA
Calender	92-98 dBA
Tile machine	100 dBA
Drying and pulling	98 dBA
At desk	98 dBA

The 2x8 sheeting machine gave values of 108 dBA. In addition, bursts of air from pistons or valves gave peaks over 110 dBA.

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Noise from these sources can be easily and inexpensively controlled by the installation of noise silencers - e.g., Permashush Noise Silencers by: Bonded Products, Inc.
P.O. Box 263, Wrentham, MA 02093.

A copy of the literature is being sent to Jack. It should be a company policy to install silencers on all such equipment.

As you know, the D.O.L. and labor unions now are properly pushing control of noise and airborne contaminants, rather than the use of personal protective equipment. The plant has a fairly good ear protection plan underway, but the use of ear protection is now considered only as an "interim" solution. The St. Helens plant may possibly be particularly vulnerable, inasmuch as they are producers of high quality acoustical materials, have expertise in acoustics and noise control, and - as far as I could see - are not using any of their products to reduce the relatively hazardous noise levels in their own plant.

A number of suggestions were made to plant personnel on possible ways to reduce the noise levels at several locations, using their own products and other materials such as lead-lined vinyl cloth.

The plant has a long way to go on noise control. A systematic approach should be initiated immediately.

I will be glad to assist in any way I can.

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