FILE NAME: Tile Council of America (TCA)

DATE: 1966

DOC#: TCA006

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letters from Johns Manville

March 7, 1966

Johns Manville
Asbestos Fiber Division
Box 1500
Asbestos, P.Q., Canada

Dear Sirs:

In mortar formulas 759 and 763 which the Tile Council of America licenses to several companies in the United States and other countries, there is a percentage of asbestos fibers, your grade 7 TF 1. Enclosed is a copy of an article which appeared in the New York Times which says that asbestos dust is a hazard which extends to workers in "contiguous trades" such as other construction workers and their families.

Please bring us up to date on your own thinking regarding this subject. Is there a hazard when this material is added to the dry mixes in the mortar factories? Are the tile setters exposed to dangers from exposure to asbestos dust when they use these mortars to set tile?

We have eleven licensees with at least as many factories in the United States producing these mortars and using the asbestos additive material manufactured by Johns-Manville. This is also true of some of our foreign licensees. We, therefore, shall appreciate your careful attention to the matter and an early reply.

Very sincerely yours,

JVF:mp
Enclosure

J. V. Fitzgerald

CANADIAN Johns-Manville Asbestos LIMITED

ASBESTOS FIBRE DIVISION

P.O. BOX 1500 – ASBESTOS, QUEBEC – TELEPHONE: 879-5431

March 14th, 1966

RECEIVED
MAR 17 1966

Dr. J. V. Fitzgerald,
Research Director,
Tile Council of America Inc.,
P.O. Box 326,
PRINCETON, N.J. 08540.

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

We wish to thank you for your letter of March 7th together with the press release from Dr. Selikoff with reference to the possible hazard in the use of Johns-Manville asbestos fibre grade 7TF1.

We have referred your letter to our Medical Director, Kenneth W. Smith, who is located at our Headquarters Office in New York. You can expect to receive an early reply from Dr. Smith to the questions you have raised.

Yours very truly,

N. W. Hendry/bh

N. W. HENDRY,
General Sales Manager

NWH/bh

September 2, 1966

Mr. N. W. Hendry
General Sales Manager
Canadian Johns-Manville Asbestos Ltd.
P. O. Box 1500
Asbestos, Quebec, Canada

Dear Mr. Hendry:

Attached are copies of my letter of March 9 and enclosure and your reply of March 14.

We have never heard from your Medical Director Kenneth W. Smith and would appreciate knowing the status of this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

J. V. Fitzgerald

JVF:mp
Attachments

CANADIAN Johns-Manville Asbestos LIMITED

PRODUITS JM

ASBESTOS FIBRE DIVISION

P.O. BOX 1500 – ASBESTOS, QUEBEC – TELEPHONE: 879-5431

RECEIVED SEP 16 1966

September 12th, 1966

Dr. J. V. Fitzgerald,
Research Director,
Tile Council of America Inc.,
P.O. Box 326,
PRINCETON, N.J. 08540.

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

We regret that it has been necessary for you to write to us again with reference to the medical aspects of asbestos fibre in view of the fact that you requested information on the status of this matter on March 7th last. We referred your request to our Medical Director, Kenneth W. Smith, in New York at that time and we are somewhat dismayed that you have not received any communication from him.

We are again referring your request to his attention and will follow this matter to make certain that he communicates with you.

Yours very truly,

N. W. HENDRY,
General Sales Manager

NWH/bh

Asbestos Dust Called a Hazard To at Least One-Fourth of U.S.

By JANE E. BRODY

Asbestos dust, which has already been connected with the development of fatal cancer in one-half of asbestos workers, may be a potential health hazard for one-quarter of the population or more, it was reported yesterday.

This preliminary finding was described by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff in announcing the establishment of an environmental health laboratory at Mount Sinai Hospital. The laboratory will further investigate the dangers to man of asbestos and other environmental contaminants.

Dr. Selikoff said the link between cancer and asbestos had led him to suspect that other mineral dusts that contaminate both urban and rural air might create medical hazards for the public.

The new laboratory will be headed by Dr. Selikoff who, with Dr. Jacob Churg, found that asbestos workers eventually showed five to seven times the normal death rate from lung cancer and three times the normal death rate from cancer of the stomach, colon and rectum.

Other Workers Affected

Dr. Selikoff noted that the dangers of exposure to asbestos dust were not limited to those who work directly with this ubiquitous insulator and filler material. The dangers, he said, extend to workers in "contiguous trades," such as other construction workers and their families.

According to the findings of three recent limited studies, the dangers might extend to the general population. The studies, which involved autopsies on 1,100 persons in three cities, showed that 25 per cent of the people had asbestos lodged in their lungs.

Dr. Selikoff explained that the studies had used a "crude technique" that disclosed only those asbestos fibers that had become coated by an iron-rich material while lodged in the lungs. A more refined technique now shows that many persons harbor noncoated asbestos fibers as well, he said.

New Study Started

Dr. Selikoff and his colleagues at the new laboratory have started a three-year study in which they will:

¶Examine, with the deceased's family's approval, the lung tissue of the from 3,000 to 4,000 persons expected to die in the next two years at Mount Sinai, Elmhurst Hospital and Veterans Hospital in the Bronx. The doctors will look for uncoated as well as coated asbestos fibers in the tissues.

¶Look for correlations between the causes of death and the presence of asbestos fibers in lung tissue.

¶Determine the occupational history of the deceased and their relatives and other pertinent background information.

Asbestos is a fibrous mineral highly valued for its noncorrosive and long-wearing properties. In addition to its common use as a fireproof material, Dr. Selikoff said, asbestos makes up about 50 per cent of asphalt tile and is used in dental cement, brake linings, plastics, beer filters, gas masks and paper. Until last year, some schools used asbestos dust instead of sand for children to play in.

Study Links Asbestos To Cancer

By Earl Ubell
Science Editor

Scientists have known for a long time that asbestos was bad for your lungs. Now a study of New York City workers, both roofers and insulation blowers, reveals that exposure to the mineral sends lung-cancer death rates skyrocketing.

The figures—gathered by doctors at Mount Sinai Hospital—show that such workers have eight times the lung-cancer death rate as would be expected in a non-exposed population.

More suprisingly, the studies reveal that such workers run four times the risk of getting cancer in other parts of the body, with cancer of the colon particularly singled out. For all other diseases, the insulation workers have the same death rate as the rest of the population.

These findings were emphasized yesterday by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, head of Mt. Sinai's Division of Environmental Medicine, on the occasion of the establishment of an environmental health laboratory in the hospital. The laboratory has received grants totaling $324,000 from the United States Public Health Service and the New York City Health Research Council.

Dr. Selikoff also pointed out that cigarette smoking seems to heighten the effects of the asbestos. Among 130 men exposed to asbestos 20 years or more who were nonsmokers, he found one lung-cancer death among 310 smokers, 21 such deaths.

NYT Mar. 2, 1966