

FILE NAME: Powhatan (PHN)

DATE: 1956

DOC#: PHN014

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Govt Inspection Reports

Date 3.6.56 By H.F.R.

Plant

Area Powhatan Mining CoIndustry AsbestosAddress Marion AveOwensboroCounty B. HancockNumber of Employees: Male 8Female 2Total 10

Purpose of Visit

No. Involved

Persons Interviewed

Reason

Self initiated ☒O.D. Report ☐Complaint-Request ☐Management ☐Labor ☐Neighbors ☐Health Office ☐Other ☐☒ Survey☒ Reinspection 10☒ Study☒ Follow-up

Consultation

Special Activity

Project Activity

Occupational Disease

Recommendations Regarding Environmental Problems

Problems	Number Affected	Requested Improvement	Date
<u>New</u>			<u>Completed</u>
<u>Past - Completed</u>			<u>Made</u>
<u>Asbestos Dust</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>Program for servicing + maintaining respirators</u>	<u>3.6.56</u>
<u>Uncompleted</u>	<u>0</u>		

Field Studies:

No. Involved

Atmospheric Contaminants:

Physical Conditions:

Samples submitted for analysis:

☒ File Memo

Plant Record

Letter

☒ rec; Report

Next Visit

3.57Reviewed 8

Mr. Fred A. Mett is still the owner of the Company; Mr. Dennis Smith is foreman; and the employment total, including 2 girls in the office, is 10.

An inspection of the plant was made. Several workers were interviewed and the following information was furnished by Mr. Mett.

There have been no cases of illness since that of Mr. Nathan Portera a year ago. All new employees receive a preplacement examination which is given by Dr. Milton Schlenoff who is located in the neighborhood. Mr. Mett is not certain as to whether this examination includes a chest x-ray, but is of the opinion that it does. The men are x-rayed annually by the Tuberculosis Mobile Unit. He was advised that in addition to this, and for the benefit of both worker and Company alike, that he should have all of his men x-rayed at least once a year, and this he said he would try to have done.

The plant is much cleaner since the asbestosis case a year ago. Crushing, screening, and bagging operations appear to be adequately exhaust-ventilated. The men are furnished with approved dust respirators but seldom wear them. Only one was observed in actual use during the trip through the plant. Mr. Mett said that he had urged the men to wear respirators and said that if I would give him a written notice to that effect, he would have it posted in the plant and perhaps that would give the recommendation a little more force. Mr. Smith, the foreman, stated that he collected the respirators periodically, cleaned them, inserted new filters, and carried a complete line of spare parts. Several of the men produced their respirators which they keep in impervious metal boxes, and these pieces of equipment showed that they had had some use.

All in all it is believed that working conditions in the plant have improved markedly; however, annual x-ray of the workers in the plant and the wearing of respirators during dusty periods will be recommended.

WFR:ej 3/8/56

March 8, 1956

Mr. Fred A. Mett
Powhatan Mining Co.
Woodlawn
Baltimore 7, Maryland

Dear Mr. Mett:

Certain industrial dusts when breathed in sufficient quantity over a long enough period of time produce definite diseases of the lungs; and these diseases in turn greatly increase the chances of the individuals having them to also developing tuberculosis. Free silica (ordinary sand) and asbestos dusts can definitely produce lung disease. The names of these illnesses are SILICOSIS and ASBESTOSIS, respectively.

When a person, who through breathing continually excessive quantities of asbestos dust, is slowly developing the disease he may at first show no symptoms. Fibrous material, however, is slowly developing in his lungs and this condition, as it progresses, is known medically as "diffused fibrosis" and gradually reduces the air capacity of the lungs, tends to harden them and make them less resilient, and gradually increases the difficulty of breathing. This condition can usually be detected in its early stages like taking and examining an x-ray picture. As the lungs are increasingly crippled, the individual generally shows shortness of breath after mild exercise or exertion, and often develops a dry cough. There is no way of repairing this lung injury once it has occurred, and if it is allowed to develop far enough, it may cause death.

Since there is no way of curing asbestosis, the best way to handle this problem is to prevent its occurring, and it is for this reason that I am recommending that

ALL WORKERS EXPOSED TO EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES OF ASBESTOS
DUST WEAR A PROPERLY ADJUSTED RESPIRATOR APPROVED BY
BUREAU OF MINES FOR DUST DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF
EXPOSURE.

Mr. Fred A. Nett
Powhatan Mining Co.

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March 8, 1956

By complying with this recommendation, a man is not only protecting his health and earning capacity against a disease which, when once contracted, cannot be cured but helping to prevent an illness which might result in death. The Company can and does furnish respirators; it is up to the men to protect their health by wearing them.

If we can be of any service to you in matters pertaining to worker health, please feel free to call on us.

Very truly yours,

Wm. F. Reindollar, Sc. D., Chief
Division of Industrial Health
and Air Pollution

WFR:ej

March 8, 1956

Mr. Fred A. Mett
Powhatan Mining Co.
Woodlawn
Baltimore 7, Maryland

Dear Mr. Mett:

It was certainly gratifying to note the improved conditions with respect to dust control in your plant since the installation of exhaust ventilation equipment and to learn also that each man has been provided with a Bureau of Mines Approved dust respirator. It was also disappointing to learn that the men are so lax in wearing their respirators, and in order to assist you in getting them to do this, I am enclosing another letter stressing the importance of using these protective devices. With the present exhaust ventilation equipment, it is not necessary for the men to wear respirators throughout the entire working day but only during those periods when they are exposed to unusual amounts of dust, as for example when bags are being changed at the bagger, when the dried material is being rubbed through screens, when exhaust equipment is down for any reason, and when any other condition occurs which gives rise to unusual quantities of dust. The respirators may be conveniently slung around the neck where they are available for quick use when these conditions occur.

Asbestosis, like silicosis, is a lung disease which usually develops over a period of years. Like silicosis, but to a lesser extent, it predisposes the individual to tuberculosis. I am, therefore, making the two following recommendations: (1) That for the benefit of both workers and Company, the men be given a full-sized chest x-ray at least once a year. These x-ray findings could then be made a permanent part of the records of the Company and will furnish firsthand information as to whether or not a man is contracting the disease. (2) That the men be required to wear their respirators whenever exposed to unusual amounts of dust such as in the conditions mentioned above. The plant foreman, or some other authorized person should be made responsible for seeing that this recommendation is carried out. Respirators should, of course, be periodically inspected, cleaned, and new filters inserted when needed.

Since our conference Tuesday morning, I have looked into the matter of aluminum therapy in asbestosis and can find no reference to its use for this purpose, although that does not mean that it has not been tried. As you are perhaps aware when this material is used in silicosis hazards, it is applied during the exposure, i.e. the aluminum dust is insufflated (breathed in) generally before the individual goes on the job or immediately after he quits work, the thought being that the aluminum would combine with the free silica, forming an aluminum silicate, thus making the SiO_2 less reactive. It does not cause any regression of silicosis once acquired. Although this therapy has been employed in a number of places, including the gold mining industry in Canada, it does not appear to me to be the best approach to the problem. It actually involves the breathing in of one kind of dusty air with the hope or assumption that it will reduce or neutralize the toxic effects of another dusty air. A far more rational approach would appear to be the capturing of the dust at its source, or the use of respiratory protective devices which, in either case if properly carried out, would prevent the dust from getting into the lungs at all.

Any time we can be of assistance to you in matters pertaining to worker health, please feel free to call on us.

Very truly yours,

Wm. F. Reindollar, Sc. D., Chief
Division of Industrial Health
and Air Pollution

WFR:gj

Enclosure