REPORT OF THE PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS OF SPRAY ASBESTOS FIBERS

August 31, 1970

INTRODUCTION:

In the Fall of 1969, Air Management Services (AMS) learned that extensive pollution of the environment with spray asbestos fibers was occurring at a building under construction at 5 Penn Center, as a result of structural steel fireproofing operations involving the use of spray asbestos material. Efforts by AMS to persuade the contractors to institute effective measures to prevent further pollution of the environment met with little success. Subsequently, with the support of its consultants, AMS instituted a permit requirement for the use of spray asbestos materials in future construction and adopted a "total containment" policy, i.e., that spraying operations must be conducted under conditions that prevent the escape of any visible amounts of asbestos into the environment.

By the Spring 1970, construction work had begun on three other steel structures in the city wherein spray asbestos material was used. Although the release from those sites of spray asbestos material was, in general, less serious than that experienced at 5 Penn Center, there were numerous violations of the "total containment" policy and the result was far from satisfactory.

Meanwhile, the Section of Occupational and Radiological Health of the Environmental Health Services (EHS) was alerted to the potentially heavy exposure of construction workers to asbestos fibers. Accordingly, Section personnel carried out numerous inspections of the building sites and eventually concluded that voluntary efforts to control the exposure of workers to asbestos fibers would not succeed without adoption of specific regulations by

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