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OIL SPECIAL

Since the beginning of industrialisation, various cutting fluids and cutting oils have been used in machine processing, in turning, cutting, drilling, honing and screw threading.

The cutting liquid is used e.g.:
- to chill tools and parts being machined,
- to lubricate tools and parts being machined,
- to remove chips,
- to prolong the lifespan of costly tools.

There are five main groups of cutting liquids:

1. **Straight cutting oils,** based on mineral oil with a so-called EP additive (extreme pressure additive).

2. **Pure cutting oils,** based on mineral oils or fatty oils *without* additive.

3. **Compound cutting oils,** based on mixed oils, mineral oils, fatty oils *and* additives.

4. **Emulsifiable cutting oils,** straight or compound cutting oils with emulsifier added.

5. **Synthetic cutting fluids,** water solution of triethanolamine and nitrite, with additive.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Oils may cause injuries. The oils used in industry may give rise to serious illness and this goes for *all* types of industrial oils.

EFFECT ON THE SKIN

Cutting oils and fluids may cause different kinds of skin ailments in the form of irritation and injuries such as oil acne, abscesses, blackheads, allergic and non-allergic contact eczemas as well as skin cancer.

OIL ACNE, ABSCESSES AND BLACKHEADS

It is mainly the so-called straight oils which cause these ailments. Due to the fact that many machines (most of them) are designed so that the workers handling them become wet or get their hands and arms splashed with cutting oils, the risk for skin problems is very great.

The mechanism which releases the ailments may on the one hand be a chemical irritation of hair follicles and sebaceous glands, on the other hand the skin may become covered with oil so that so-called blackheads are formed. These may eventually lead to an inflammation which can develop into oil acne.

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ILO EXPERT MEETING ON ASBESTOS

ILO expert group on the use of asbestos held a meeting in Geneva on October 5—14, 1981 at the ILO headquarters, where various countries were represented.

As usual the employers were in the majority. In face of their strong opposition the trade union representatives none the less succeeded in convincing the ILO that asbestos is a hazardous material, and that it must be replaced by less dangerous materials as soon as possible.

The meeting concluded among other things that:

- guidelines on asbestos must be worked out by the ILO. They should be applicable to all countries, and formulated in an easily accessible and understandable way so that both employers and workers all over the world can use them;
- all hazardous asbestos substances should be replaced as soon as possible by non-hazardous or less dangerous materials;
- the scientific basis as regards asbestos hazards which is already at our disposal will suffice for the ILO to make a start in drawing up guidelines.

ASBESTOS–FREE BRAKE LININGS

For some years General Motors in North America have been producing cars equipped with asbestos-free brake linings. In a letter from GM to the Swedish National Board of Health and Safety the company says:

"The objective of General Motors is to deliver, by 1984, all cars with asbestos-free brake linings, both on front and rear brakes".

A similar decision has been taken by SAAB following positive results in producing asbestos-free brake linings. IMF Swedish and Norwegian affiliates have demanded that all cars which at present are equipped with brakes containing asbestos, shall be constructed with asbestos-free materials.

In accordance with IMF policy, other unions should be putting forward similar demands.

Demand that brake linings and chocks which contain asbestos be replaced immediately by asbestos-free ones ! It is not only for health reasons that asbestos-free brakes are a good thing, they are also economically advantageous as they have a longer lifespan, without reduced efficiency.



ALTHOUGH TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT HAS CHANGED AND IMPROVED WORKPLACES, WE STILL FACE GREAT PROBLEMS OF WORKING ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS EXPOSURE TO OIL.

← *This is how a modern workshop looked in the 1930s.*

The same workshop 40 years later. →