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PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

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Drastic Cut in Asbestos Exposure Urged By Federal Agency for 250,000 Workers

By GAIL BRONSON
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Federal researchers are urging a drastic reduction in the occupational exposure of more than 250,000 workers to asbestos, a known carcinogen, to one-tenth of the current federal standard. Corcinogens are cancer producing or inciting agents.

In an unpublished report, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends that worker exposure to airborne asbestos be limited to 100,000 fibers per cubic meter of air in eight hours. In addition, the researchers want peak concentrations of exposure limited to 500,000 fibers per cubic meter of air based on 15-minute sampling periods.

Current federal standards limit asbestos to two million fibers per cubic meter of air. This standard was promulgated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1972, at which time industry was given four years to comply. Plants were required to set up improved ventilation systems. In the interim period, an "emergency" exposure standard remained in force after it was set by OSHA under pressure from the AFL-CIO.

The institute recommendations in 1972 to OSHA were well below those actually carried out. "Our 1972 recommendations were designed to protect workers from asbestosis, or chronic lung disease," says Verne rose, institute director for criteria documentation, "but not necessarily from cancer. We are now suggesting the least detectable exposure level in the workplace. The reason is that we don't know what could possibly be a safe level of exposure over the working lifetime without adverse health effects."

The lethal quality of tiny asbestos fibers that lodge in the lungs is well documented. If the exposure to asbetos dust in the workplace is slashed, industries that use the material such as construction and oil refining, may come under increased pressure to substitute nontoxic materials. Asbestos is used in fireproof textiles, shingle insulation, and thermal piping, among other products.

"It's not possible to establish a safe exposure level for the carcinogenic activity of asbestos," says Dr. John F. Finklea, director of the institute. "Therefore, emphasis should be placed on prohibiting the occupational use of asbestos in other than completely closed operations, and on substituting other products whenever possible."

The 1972 institute recommendations on asbestos to OSHA were based in part on the research of the British Occupational Hygiene Society, which evaluated 200 workers in an asbestors factory. Based on that work, the institute concluded that a two-million-fibers limit would prevent asbestosis.

However, when the British plant was restudied in 1972, it was found that there was a greater incidence of asbestosis than the British standard warranted. In fact, 36% of the workers exposed for 10 years to 19 years had some kind of chest abnormality, and the rate of abnormalities increased with the rate of asbestos exposure.

Other studies show an increased mortality rate from cancer among workers exposed to asbestos, says John Dement, an institute industrial hygienist. A British study published this year showed that workers exposed to asbestos from 1933 to 1950 had 1.8 times as much chance of contracting lung cancer as the expected number of cancer cases in the general population. Mr. Dement adds that British secientists found that in workers employed up to 15 years beyond 1950, during a period when industry improved its engineering controls and technology for plant environment, the excess cancer case statistics continued to show up.

In a South Dakota gold-mine study published this year, researchers found that the 440 workers had three times as many cases of respiratory disease as expected, based on the state mortality rates. These workers were exposed to less than 250,000 fibers per cubic meter in eight hours.

"We're saying reduce exposures (to asbestos) to a bare minimum because we can't tell you how low you have to go to eliminate a cancer risk," says Mr. Dement "All studies have shown an excess of cancer risk at all levels of exposure to asbestos."

The reason for OSHA reevaluating the asbestos standard stems from a 1974 suit by the AFL-CIO's industrial union department against the Department of Labor complaining about several points in the 1972 exposure standard. The AFL-CIO petitioned for changes to be made in the required medical records that employers maintain on workers, and it requested that the timetable for lowering asbestos exposure limits be stepped up.

The federal court of appeals in Washington, D.C., directed OSHA to reconsider those two provisions of the standard. At that time, the enforcement agency decided the standard possibly wasn't protective enough of asbestos workers' health and it decided to repropose the entire standard, beyond the court directive, says an OSHA spokesman.

OSHA enlisted the aid of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in the re-evaluation to study new research developments and explore advances in protective technology as they related to asbestos exposure. The OSHA spokesman said the agency will hold public hearings early next year on proposed revised standards before promulgating the final rule.

current standard - 2 fibers / Cubic cent. of Air
(2 M / Cubic meter)

above proposal 0.1 fiber / cc of air
(100 M / cubic meter)

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Our latest survey - 0.05 fibers / cc of air
(50 M / cubic meter)

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asbestos tremolite was very rare and not found in Vanderbilt's New York mines. Another asbestos substance is mined there and used in spackling compound, but Harvey explained those packages are labeled as containing asbestos.

He said HRG "must be taking the NIOSH attitude," and added that "they have their own definition and are alone of all the groups in defining what is and is not asbestos." He said the other "groups" which did not consider the Vanderbilt talc as containing asbestos were, in addition to OSHA, the Bureau of Mines, the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The HRG report contended that Corn's predecessor as head of OSHA, John Stender, allowed the company to avoid having to comply with the standard by certifying "without providing scientific evidence" that the talc is free of asbestos. It contends further that Vanderbilt later influenced the agency to revise its standard by field memorandum and remove tremolite from the list of asbestos minerals. HRG called the process "illegal."

Vanderbilt brought pressure on OSHA through five members of Congress and gave three of them — Senators James Buckley (R-NY) and Lowell Weicker (R-Conn) and Congressman Robert McEwen (R-NY) — campaign contributions of $300 each from the company's president, the report said.

It added that one former official at NIOSH objected to the redefinition and the continued distribution of the talc without asbestos warning but that nothing was said publicly. NIOSH and the National Bureau of Standards were directed by Corn to analyze the Vanderbilt talc.

In the meantime, the report said, nearly 200 workers in Vanderbilt mines, an undetermined number of workers in plants which use Vanderbilt talc, and the public which buys products containing Vanderbilt talc are exposed to asbestos.

OSHA is being urged by HRG to retract its field memorandum (74-92) redefining the substance as nonasbestos, disallow Vanderbilt from certifying that its talc is free of asbestos, warn manufacturers of the possible dangers, and "investigate the personnel and the procedures which allowed such an illegal series of events to occur and persist for so long."

Methyl Parathion

NIOSH RECOMMENDS EXPOSURE LIMIT OF 0.2 MILLIGRAMS, OTHER MEASURES

An exposure limit should be established for methyl parathion of no more than 0.2 milligrams per cubic meter of air as a time-weighted average for up to a 10-hour workday, 40-hour workweek, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

NIOSH transmitted the recommendations on September 27 to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Current Report, October 7, p. 532).

The NIOSH recommendations and the first two appendices appear in the Full Text section of this Current Report.

Health Hazards

CHEMICAL WORKERS INHALING FUMES SHOW HIGHER CANCER RISKS, STUDY SHOWS

Inhaling fumes on the job can increase a chemical worker's chances of developing stomach cancer by as much as 27 times and a leather worker's chances of getting bladder cancer 24 times, biostatisticians at an upstate New York cancer institute have found.

Employees in the leather industry also have greater chances of developing cancer of the larynx — 22 times more than average — from fume inhalation, the study showed.

Records of 12,000 male patients at the Roswell Park Memorial Institute, a cancer center of the New York Department of Health in Buffalo, were analyzed for cancer type and patient's occupation. They were compared with a control group of clerks whose work did not expose them to suspected cancer-producing agents.

The study, "Cancer Experience of Men Exposed to Inhalation of Chemicals or to Combustion Products," also included data on workers such as bus and taxi drivers, mechanics, and kitchen employees exposed to smoke or engine exhaust. Compared with workers who breathe chemical fumes, the combustion-exhaust workers did not show significantly higher risks of contracting cancer.

Enrico Viadana, one of the study's authors, told OSHR the figures obtained in the study can be used "as a first step to search for the causes" of the increased cancer occurrences in the industries surveyed. He said the findings have been turned over to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Seventeen forms of cancer were identified in the study, and relative risks were assigned to 13 occupations. Other statistical breakdowns covered employees over 60 years of age and under 60, and those who were at their jobs over five years and under five years.

The highest risk of stomach cancer, 27 times greater than average, was discovered in chemical workers over 60 who had been at their jobs at least five years. Workers of all ages at the job less than five years had four times the risk of getting stomach cancer.

Other cancer risk findings:

- Larynx: 3.2 among barbers (60+,5-), 6.8 among chemical workers (-60,5+), 22 among leather workers (60+,5+).
- Stomach: 27 among chemical workers (60+,5+), 11 (60-,5-); 12 among painters (60+,5+), 12 (60-, 5-).
- Mouth and pharynx: 18 among leather workers (60+, 5+), 8 (60+,5-).
- Bladder: 24 among leather workers (60+,5+), 9.7 (60+,5-).

Among occupations involving inhalation of combustion products, it was found that a 2.3 risk of cancer of the mouth and pharynx existed among bus, taxi, and truck drivers over 60 with less than five years at the job, 1.9 risk over 60 with more than five years, and 2.2 risk of cancer of the prostate among mechanics and repairmen over 60 with less than five years.

Health Hazards

LEUKEMIA, LUNG CANCER ARE HIGHER AMONG ALUMINUM SMELTER WORKERS

Workers at aluminum primary smelters are more prone to leukemia, motor vehicle accidents, lung cancer, and certain types of hypertensive disease, according to initial findings of a health study of The Aluminum Association.

The association said the study was based on 23,000 workers, which includes virtually all those in the United States employed at least five years in an aluminum smelter that had been in operation for at least 20 years during the period 1946-1973.

The study also found that the workers are less prone to a number of specific diseases than the general population.

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