FILE NAME: Shipbuilders Council of America (SHIP)

DATE: 1978 June 23

DOC#: SHIP081

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo RE Purpose and First Meeting Date for the Ad Hoc Committee on Asbestos with Article Attached

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SHIPBUILDERS COUNCIL OF AMERICA
600 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE., N.W. | WASHINGTON, D. C. 20037

June 23, 1978

To: AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ASBESTOS

Mr. David Lavalette	General Dynamics Corp.
Mr. Robert Barnhart	Sun Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co.
Mr. Dan Whichard	Ingalls Shipbuilding
Mr. Frank Darling	National Steel & Shipbuilding Co.
Mr. George Bowen	Bethlehem Steel Corp.
Mr. Tom Savas	Newport News Shipbuilding
Dr. Joseph Bogni	General Dynamics Corp., Quincy Shipbuilding Div.

Subject: Initial Meeting on August 8, 1978

The Board of Directors of the Shipbuilders Council of America has authorized the formation of a special Ad Hoc Committee on Asbestos. Such a committee is considered necessary to bring this problem into focus and to exchange information on possible methods of dealing with present and past employees, Government agencies and the media.

Recent events suggest a heightening of potential problems and liabilities for shipyards:

(1) The Asbestosis Questionnaire being circulated to present and former shipyard employees by the National Cancer Institute

(2) The rapid increase in workers compensation claims and negligence law suits in Naval shipyards and to a lesser extent in private shipyards

(3) The National Cancer Institute has hired Porter Novelli Marketing of Washington, DC to put together a public service campaign. Porter Novelli has in turn hired Bean/Kahn Films International, Inc. to produce television public service spot announcments. This firm has already filmed an asbestos ripout at Philadelphia Naval Shipyard with the approval of the Chief of Naval Information

Mr. Dave Lavalette of the General Dynamics Corporate Office has agreed to serve as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee. He has asked that there be representatives from the Industrial Health and Safety Committee, Workers Compensation Committee and Industrial Relations Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee will hold its first meeting at the office of the SCA in Washington, DC at 10 AM on August 8, 1978.

Frank R. Kesterman
Vice President and
Secretary

agreed with the House and provided $167.5 million for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and nearly $62 million for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Current Report, June 15, p. 64).

The Senate subcommittee disagreed with the House and did not add an amendment to the measure to prohibit OSHA from issuing any regulations which would restrict recreational hunting, fishing, or sports shooting.

But the subcommittee agreed with the House and voted to continue the restrictions on OSHA which were first included in the FY 77 budget. Those amendments to OSHA's budget exempt farms employing 10 or fewer persons from the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and prohibit civil penalties for first-instance nonserious violations of the Act, unless 10 or more violations are cited during an inspection.

When the House voted to continue those restrictions on OSHA, it decided to exclude farms which have a temporary labor camp from the exemption for farms employing 10 or fewer persons. These differences between the House and Senate versions will have to be resolved in a conference between the two houses, unless the full committee or the Senate votes to disagree with the subcommittee recommendations and to agree with the House.

Additional Inspectors

Senator Warren Magnuson (D-Wash), chairman of the Appropriations Committee and of the Labor-HEW Subcommittee, will propose before the full committee an amendment to add $12.5 million to the OSHA budget to hire as many as 500 more inspectors. His amendment was not offered before the subcommittee.

In a June 9 letter to Magnuson, Assistant Labor Secretary Eula Bingham wrote that OSHA "can effectively utilize the additional compliance officers." She suggested that the agency could hire 325 industrial hygienists, 125 safety specialists, and 50 persons to conduct discrimination investigations.

Bingham estimated that the 500 new inspectors would permit OSHA to conduct 8,500 additional health inspections, 10,000 additional safety inspections, and 2,500 more discrimination investigations. She explained that health inspections usually take three to four times longer than safety inspections, which would account for the expected greater increase in the number of safety inspections even though more new health specialists would be hired.

Bingham wrote Magnuson that OSHA expects the annual number of its inspections to decrease because of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the *Barlow's Inc.* case, but she could not give "a precise estimate of the decrease as (OSHA does) not yet have sufficient data on denial of entry cases to indicate a trend" (Current Report, May 25, p. 1923).

But Bingham commented that an increase in the number of inspectors would allow OSHA to maintain its present inspection rate and to expand its coverage in such "high-hazard industries" as construction and grain elevators.

Mine Safety

The Senate subcommittee did not approve an amendment offered by Senator Robert Byrd (D-WVa) to increase the NIOSH budget to fund certain activities mandated by the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977.

HEW previously had refused NIOSH requests for funding for certain activities required under the new mine safety law (Current Report, June 15, p. 64). The House also did not increase NIOSH's funding for these activities.

Black Lung Supplemental

The Senate passed on June 23 an increase of $181.6 million for the Labor Department's Employment Standards Administration during the current fiscal year, which ends September 30. The increased funds, which were approved by the House on June 9, will be used to implement the black lung benefits legislation enacted by Congress earlier this year.

The Senate agreed with the amount included in the House version (HJRes 945), but the joint resolution will have to be considered by a conference committee between the two Houses because of differences in aspects of it which have nothing to do with the black lung compensation benefits program (Current Report, June 15, p. 64).

Asbestos

SHORT-EXPOSURE RISK INDICATED IN STUDY OF NEW JERSEY WORKERS, RESEARCHER SAYS

NEW YORK CITY — (By an OSHR staff correspondent) — Workers employed for only a month or two at a Patterson, N.J., asbestos plant during the period 1941-1954 showed "a clear mortality excess" from lung cancer and all forms of asbestos disease, Herbert Seidman, American Cancer Society, reported June 24.

Seidman appeared at the June 21 through June 30 International Conference on Health Hazards of Asbestos Exposure, sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences.

In a survey of some 821 workers, Seidman reported, six deaths from lung cancer were found among those who had worked at the plant for only one month, as compared with 2.47 deaths expected based on mortality patterns for the Patterson area. There also were eight deaths from all forms of asbestos disease, including mesothelioma, as contrasted with the 4.84 deaths expected.

Seidman termed the excess "important," and added that the risk of lung cancer and asbestos disease became even greater for workers exposed to asbestos for longer periods.

For example, among workers who worked at the plant two or more years, there were 39 deaths from lung cancer rather than the 5.97 deaths expected, Seidman noted. There were 76 deaths from all asbestos diseases, as compared with the 12.41 deaths expected.

Among the workers who were exposed to asbestos for one month, adverse health effects from the exposure first were seen after 20 years. The effects were observed sooner among those with longer exposure, Seidman added.

The plant involved in the study was owned by the Nicholson File Company, and it provided asbestos for U.S. Navy ships during and after World War II. Ventilation at the plant was "poor," and "even short periods of exposure left a large numoer of asbestos fibers in the workers' lungs," according to the American Cancer Society researcher.

Workers at the facility were exposed only to one variety of asbestos, amosite, according to Irving Selikoff, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, who collaborated on the study with Seidman and another American Cancer Society researcher, E. Cuyler Hammond. This determination was based on Navy specifications and on records of the products sold by the company, Selikoff explained.

In a study of 17,800 American and Canadian insulation workers whose histories were followed from 1943 to 1977, 2,270 deaths were observed compared with the 1,660 deaths expected, Selikoff also reported. Cancer was the "most important" cause of death, with 994 cases observed rather than the 320 expected.

The cancer mortalities included 175 deaths from pleural and peritoneal mesothelioma, two forms of cancer that are extremely rare in the general population, according to the Mt. Sinai researcher.

Chemical Maintenance Workers

A study of 144 chemical plant maintenance workers indicated abnormal chest X-ray findings among 48.4 percent of those with direct asbestos exposure, according to Ruth Lillis, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine. Pleural changes, including thickening and calcification of the membrane, were found in 28 percent of the total group.

Some 45.4 percent of the maintenance workers who had some asbestos exposure produced abnormal chest X-rays, while readings were abnormal for 24.2 percent of those workers who were not exposed to asbestos, Lillis added.

Chronic bronchitis rates were similar for both smokers and nonsmokers, with 23 percent of those who smoked exhibiting bronchitis, compared with 19 percent of the nonsmokers, Lillis told conference attendees.

Asbestos exposure involving maintenance workers presents a "very serious problem for the future," Selikoff commented. In many cases, employers do not realize that products in their facilities contain asbestos. The problem involves "a vast number of workers," because in many chemical plants there are as many maintenance employees as chemical workers, Selikoff commented.

Shipyard Hazards

High rates of lung cancer and cancer of the pharynx have been found in three-fourths of the U.S. southern coastal counties where shipyards operated during World War II, according to William J. Blot of the National Cancer Institute.

A study of these counties was initiated after NCI demographic research showed an "unexpected pattern" of high cancer mortality clustered along the Gulf Coast and on the U.S. southeast Atlantic coast, Blot stated. In addition to an excess of lung and pharynx cancer, high rates of bronchial, esophagus, and stomach cancer have been noted.

Lack of information on the smoking histories of cancer victims in these counties has hampered the NCI study, but "it is unlikely that smoking would account totally for the pattern," Blot commented.

Currently NCI is conducting a field study on the Georgia coast, where preliminary figures show an excess lung cancer risk among persons who worked in shipyards in Savannah and Brunswick during the Second World War, the NCI scientist announced. Some 20 percent of the 500 lung cancer victims interviewed by NCI so far reported that they had worked in shipyards during the war.

NCI is halfway through another case-control interview study in the Tidewater area of Virginia, the location of the Newport News, Va., Naval Shipyard. Results of this project "should clarify the shipyard problem," Blot commented. He added that information on exposures at the shipyard should be less difficult to gather than similar data in the Georgia study, because the Newport News facility is still in operation.

Other studies are planned in Maine, where lung cancer incidence is rising, and in Louisiana, where shipbuilding was a major industry during the war, Blot noted.

All persons who have worked in shipyards in the past, whatever their craft, face the risk of developing asbestos-related disease, according to Phillip L. Polakoff, Western Institute for Occupational and Environmental Health, Berkeley, Calif. In a study involving 359 workers from shipyards at Hunter's Point and Mare Island, Calif., 59 percent of the employees were found to have pleural and parenchymal abnormalities.

The abnormalities "were distributed evenly among all occupations," including painters, sailmakers, laborers, mechanics, and carpenters, Polakoff stated.

There was a significant increase in pleural changes with advancing age, the researcher continued. A high incidence of parenchymal changes was discovered, but these changes occurred "independent of age." This discrepancy may be explained, Polakoff theorized, by the possibility that the study inadvertently used a select group of workers with abnormalities in all age groups. The changes also might have been due to factors other than asbestos, such as cigarette smoking or exposure to other toxic agents.

Groton Study

An increase in pleural and peritoneal changes corresponding to longer periods of time from first exposure to asbestos was found in a study of 1,000 workers from the Electric Boat Company shipyard at Groton, Conn., Irving Selikoff reported.

Abnormalities were found in 43 percent of the workers whose first exposure to asbestos occurred less than 20 years ago, the Mt. Sinai researcher stated. The rate increased to 50 percent among workers first exposed more than 20 years ago.

Abnormalities were found in all trades, but there were not enough workers from any one group to compare the incidence rates and thus identify any workers who might be particularly at risk, Selikoff noted.

Comparing lung cancer rates among shipyard workers with those for insulation workers not employed in shipyards, Selikoff said he found the rates "very much the same."

Some 153 out of 500 production workers at the U.S. Navy shipyard at Long Beach, Calif., have been found to have asbestosis, according to a report by Jean S. Felton, Naval Regional Medical Center. The Navy began a study of workers at the shipyard in June 1977.

X-rays have been taken for 68 percent of all the workers at the shipyard, and indicate abnormal findings for 16 percent of the workers thus far examined. The abnormalities show a linear increase by age, occurring in 34 percent of those workers employed at the facility for at least 17 years, Felton reported. The Navy hopes to take X-rays of the remaining workers during the next month, conference attendees were told.

Carcinogens

HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS CONCERNED OVER REGULATION COSTS, INDUSTRY SAYS

Recent controversy over the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's cotton dust standard demonstrates the concern "at the highest levels of Government" for the economic effects of regulating, OSHA's hearing on a carcinogens policy was told June 26.

Richard Zeckhauser, a witness for the American Petroleum Institute, predicted "years of delay in litigation" for the proposed policy unless OSHA attempts to analyze the costs and benefits of the proposal and tries to estimate risks to workers.

Individual firms and the American Industrial Health Council, an umbrella-group of companies and trade associations, earlier had presented the first testimony from the business sector as the hearings continued into the second month (Current Report, June 22, p. 86).

Zeckhauser, a political economist from Harvard University, referred during his testimony to President Carter's involvement in the OSHA cotton dust standard and the review

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