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Report of BC – Reynolds Metals

Reynolds officials recommended separate lockers for work clothes and street clothes with an intervening shower or washroom, with hazardous aluminum dust. (Jan. 1943 GM Babcock and FB Rethwisch “Safety in Handling Aluminum Powders” *Chem. Metallurgical Eng.*)

In 1942, an article published in the *Medical Bulletin of the Veterans Administration* described asbestosis in an aluminum plant worker from wearing asbestos apron and gloves.

Edward Largent of Reynolds was listed in 1959 membership directory of American Industrial Hygiene Assn. In its *AIHA Journal*, an *Industrial Hygiene Guide* was published in 1958 and Marr’s article on asbestosis at shipyards in 1964.

Reynolds *Industrial Hygiene Bulletin* “Asbestos” described Marinite board as the largest potential source of asbestos in RMC plants. (Sept. 1963) It described asbestosis in some detail and said cancer had been alleged in connection with asbestosis. It recommended local exhaust ventilation to keep exposures under 5 MPPCF, respirators, periodic medical exams of workers in dusty areas. In Reynolds’ (9-7-65) specification for using sprayed Limpet asbestos insulation, “All employees working with Limpet blown asbestos are required to wear respirators.”

Hygienist Ed Largent internal correspondence “A Reminder on Marinite” quoted a 12/15/66 text, “Cancer-Asbestos Link Reported by Public Health Service”. This was sent to 15 plant managers and Dr. JM MacMillan. (December 21 [year cut off but evidently 1966])

Reynolds acquired Tilo Roofing in Connecticut in 1960-61. Liberty Mutual reviewed medical arrangements with the personnel director MR Baker and noted the significance of the asbestosis hazard: “evidence is accumulating that only a slight exposure, even at some distance can be potentially hazardous.” (12/18/67)

A report by Largent to Reynolds’ Dr. JM MacMillan on air sampling in the Tilo plant noted dustiness near the machine that puts the finished edges on asbestos shingles. Largent noted that “current controversy” over asbestos and cancers of the lung and peritoneum warrant careful surveillance. (Ed Largent to “Tilo Company” 2/7/68)

Tilo’s purchasing agent wrote to Johns-Manville re J-M’s notice that bags of asbestos from J-M mines would soon carry labels warning that inhalation of asbestos over long periods may be harmful. Claiming that this would be unnecessary and unduly alarming, he requested that labels be omitted on J-M shipments to Tilo. (11/19/68) J-M officials

considered how to resolve the objections of Tilo and two other customers to placement of the caution labels on sacks of asbestos. (N Hendry, 1/21/69).

A Bechtel memo on a report by Reynolds on asbestos exposures from use of sprayed Limpet insulation described, "considerable quantity of visible agglomerates of asbestos floating downwind of the area". Measurements recorded were 0.2-2.4 f/cc (2/25/72).

Dr. EC Irby (Assoc. Med. Dir.) sent a memo to all plant managers, "Compliance with OSHA Asbestos Regulations." This enclosed the 1972 OSHA regulations and stated that "we have no asbestos counts and no serious estimates as to what the counts might be in our various asbestos using areas." He said air sampling would proceed in cast hoses where asbestos was machined and in areas where asbestos cement was handled. (1/4/73)

Dr. Irby informed production managers that OSHA had cited one plant for violation of the asbestos standard. The Medical Department recommended that machining and working of all asbestos-containing products be prohibited until they can be sure of compliance. (3/1/73)

Corporate industrial hygienist HM Cole's "Company Confidential" memo reported that a preliminary survey at the Sherwin Alumina Plant showed numerous violations of the asbestos regulations: no personal protective equipment, no caution signs, no monitoring program, no labels on raw materials or wastes, external surfaces where asbestos insulation had fallen hadn't been cleaned of accumulations of dust, medical exams were not provided, food was eaten in areas with asbestos dust. (1/24/74)

Asbestos measurements at the San Patricio Plant included 9 dust counts, the three highest being 12-22 f/cc. (3/18/74) HM Cole's memo on Industrial Hygiene Survey at San Patricio: "letters informing employees of over-exposure to asbestos fibers were held up at my request as a result of errors in my previous report." The same measurements as previously recorded were repeated in attached report of 2/19/74, the 10 f/cc ceiling limit was noted under the list of measurements. It is not clear whether any workers were notified. (5/20/74)

"Project Asbestos" (6/13/74) said the prospect of causing cases of asbestosis and mesothelioma "is too grim to abide" and set the goal of eliminating asbestos from Reynolds manufacturing processes. The types and makers of non-asbestos substitute products were listed. There was still no substitute for J-M Marinite asbestos board. In addition to describing safeguards for removing asbestos materials and replacing them with non-asbestos substitutes, this instruction was given: "When an asbestos containing material must be cut, milled, or machined, have it done by others off Reynolds Metals Company premises."