

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS DIVISION

0641906

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March 17, 1976



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO VERMICULITE ORE PROCESSORS

W. R. Grace & Co. is finding it necessary to use dust control for ore handling and processing to meet current OSHA dust regulations in plants. As employers of workers handling vermiculite ore, you should be aware of these regulations and of pending changes to them.

The most difficult standard to meet applies to a "tramp" mineral found in vermiculite deposits. It is tremolite, defined by OSHA as one of the asbestos family. Dust control systems you install should be selected on the basis of keeping airborne concentration of this material within limits.

Current requirements which limit exposure of employees to an eight hour time weighted concentration of five fibers per cubic centimeter of air can be found in detail in title 29 Code of Federal Regulations PART 1910. This will be reduced to two fibers on July 1, 1976. A further reduction to 0.5 fibers has been proposed.

Comments on the proposed standard may be made to OSHA through April 9, 1976. Thereafter hearings will be held on the proposed standard. A copy of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is enclosed for your information. Grace believes the proposed 0.5 fiber limit is too stringent for current technology to achieve.

As an ore processor, you should sample air of your operation and take appropriate action regarding the current and proposed OSHA regulations.

Richard I. Morris
Richard I. Morris

RIM:cj

GRACE

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TO: BPD Regional Management

cc: See Distribution List

We sent the attached notice to all of our customers who purchase crude vermiculite ore notifying them of current and proposed OSHA standards for dust control in their plants.

The most difficult standard applies to tremolite which appears as a "tramp" mineral mixed with many types of ores, vermiculite included. OSHA defines tremolite as a member of the asbestos family.

Although we remove a great deal of tremolite during processing, it is not now possible to provide our ore customers with a totally tremolite-free product. As a result, we felt obliged to send this notice to our customers, since they, like us, are employers of plant workers who handle vermiculite ore and are, therefore, subject to OSHA regulations.

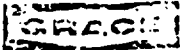
You may receive questions about the asbestos content in our expanded products as a result of this notice to ore users. If so, please note that the notice applies to ore, not expanded products. In addition, the OSHA regulations relate to the employer-employee relationship only.

Significant amounts of the tremolite are removed during the expansion process. We are now testing each of our products for tremolite content and airborne dust levels during their use so that we will know where we stand when specific regulations concerning use of our products in the construction industry are established. Should you be subject to detailed questioning about asbestos in our products, please refer these questions to your regional manager.


J. L. Wright

JLW:cj

Attachment



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ORE BAG LABELING

Until further notice, the following label will appear on bags
in which vermiculite ore is shipped to processors.

CAUTION
Contains Asbestos Fibers - *avoid creating dust*
Breathing Asbestos Dust May Cause
Serious Bodily Harm