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PROJECT ASBESTOS

One of the major goals the Department of Industrial Hygiene has set for itself for the year 1974 is the complete elimination of asbestos from Reynolds Metals Company manufacturing processes. The reason for this effort is simply that compliance with the OSHA Standard for asbestos is far too costly and time consuming. Further, the prospect of causing cases of asbestosis and/or mesothelioma (the special cancer caused by asbestos) is too grim to abide.

Progress in this project has been slowed because of confusion and difficulty in finding suitable substitutes for the various asbestos containing products we use. The following is a partial list of asbestos-free products now available, and some of their possible uses:

Cerwool - C. E. Refractory Company
Kaowool - Babcock and Wilcox
Fiberfrax - Carborundum Corporation
Cerafiber - Johns-Manville

The above materials are obtainable as loose fiber or as a blanket in roll form, and are useful for many packing, sealing and shielding applications. Fiberfrax is available in paper form to substitute for asbestos paper.

Fiber Seal Gasket Strip
Fibrous Glass Products Company
9601 East Montgomery Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99206

This material is being successfully substituted for asbestos rope. Johns-Manville will shortly be supplying a rope made of silica-alumina fiber also.

Glass Rock
Glass Rock Products Company
Calhoun, Georgia

This company supplies sheets and a mortar which can be used as a castable. A principal use is for lining pouring troughs.

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A number of refractory manufacturers are supplying insulating block made of fiberglass, C. E. Refractory for one. Other blocks made of diatomaceous earth and lime are available (Suprex by Johns-Manville).

Johns-Manville supplies 375 Insulating Cement.

This leaves the need for a substitute for Marinite board. Johns-Manville has such a material under development, and has placed test samples with many industrial plants - including Reynolds Metals Company plants - but has had scant return to date. It would be most helpful if those Reynolds Metals Company plants who have samples would respond as rapidly as possible, so that commercial supplies may become available sooner.

Progress has been made, but much more is obviously needed. In the meantime, the Medical Department urges the following:

- (1) Strive to find substitutes for all asbestos uses.
- (2) When an asbestos containing material must be cut, milled, or machined, have it done by others off Reynolds Metals Company premises.
- (3) When removing old asbestos containing materials from service, keep it wet wherever possible and remove direct to labelled plastic bags or other sealable containers and dispose of by landfill. Removed asbestos should never be left in work areas - even for short periods. Under no circumstances should asbestos scrap be mixed with other scrap and debris.

This office would deeply appreciate receiving further information on asbestos substitutes from any source.

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