

OWENS CORNING
FIBERGLAS

Intra-company correspondence

to R. A. Yudkin - T/27

subject Former OCF Employees
Exposed to Asbestos

from Jon L. Konzen, M.D.

date May 23, 1978

cc: D. J. Billmaier, M.D. - T/11
F. O'M. Brisley - E/9
G. E. Devitt - T/11 ✓
R. S. Hite - Berlin
J. P. Kern - E/9
W. L. Kreutz - T/15
R. W. Roth - E/9
L. W. Saxby - E/10
John Vyverberg - New York

On April 26, 1978 Joseph Califano, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, issued a broadly publicized statement bringing attention to the possible increased risk of death from an asbestos related disease many years after exposure had terminated. While it was directed at shipyard exposure during WW II, the statement also encompassed all other previous occupational exposure to asbestos. The statement suggested the previously exposed worker should cease cigarette smoking and seek examination from his physician. Simultaneously, the Surgeon General, Dr. Julius B. Richman, issued a Physician Advisory on the health effects of asbestos to over 400,000 practicing physicians in the United States.

On the same day, an article appeared in several newspapers including the local Berlin paper which indicated that Owens-Corning had been named in a lawsuit by the widow of an asbestos installer. The suit against the company was favorably resolved in favor of the widow.

This publicity caused concern among those Berlin employees who had been exposed to asbestos in the past and also raised the question of continued exposure because of plant contamination.

The plant received two 'phone calls from former workers; both were informed that Corporate Headquarters was reviewing the matter and their 'phone call would be returned.

It was decided within a day or two of the Califano statement that as a temporary measure any 'phone calls would be answered indicating that the individual was exposed (if indeed he was exposed) to asbestos to the extent that he should, as part of his on-going periodic personal health examination, seek examination by his family physician at his own expense. If the person still had further questions or his physician had further questions about asbestos or the exposure, it was suggested that the individual should call the plant physician.

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MEDICAL SERVICES

DEFENDANT'S
EXHIBIT

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When Mr. Warmath of the Berlin Plant returned the calls he was successful in reaching the wife of one of the workers. This woman had originated one of the two 'phone calls. She was satisfied with the answer and indicated she felt the company was being responsive. Mr. Warmath was unsuccessful in reaching the other individual.

It was learned from Frank Brisley that several inquiries had come into the Union asking what the Union was going to do about the matter. It was unclear whether these inquiries were from employees or former employees.

On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, May 10, 11 and 12, Dr. Billmaier spoke at shift meetings at the Berlin plant in order to put the asbestos risk into perspective. Dr. Billmaier indicated that the questions were reasonable and the talks appeared to be well accepted. Dr. Billmaier will draw together a number of typical questions asked and the replies given. These will be placed into a question/answer form for possible future educational use.

There was concern among the employees of possible continuing asbestos exposure due to plant contamination.

Shortly after the asbestos was removed from the Berlin plant in 1972, the plant was cleaned up and sampled. There was not an appreciable airborne exposure to asbestos. The plant has been sampled periodically since that time because we replaced the asbestos with fibrous glass. The airborne concentrations of all fibers are extremely low, well below 1 fiber/cc.

Within recent months the plant has undergone some remodeling and renovation of the large autoclaves. Construction work is still continuing. This has resulted in tearing out old asbestos containing Kaylo. Mr. Devitt is, at this writing, reviewing that potential exposure and making recommendations on containment as well as proper personal protective equipment for our OCF exposed workers.

We have continued to examine workers who have been previously exposed to asbestos at the Berlin plant on a yearly basis. Once the individual leaves our employment we have not provided continuing periodic monitoring.

With regard to the Bloomington plant, asbestos containing insulation was produced for approximately 1-1/2 years after we obtained the plant. During this time vigorous efforts were made to control the environmental exposure and periodic examinations were carried out. These periodic examinations have been continued even after asbestos production was stopped. There have been no formal educational programs regarding asbestos hazards at the Bloomington plant. Currently, there are approximately 26 people, 16 hourly and 10 salaried, who had exposure to asbestos (see attached memo from Mr. Brisley).

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We do know that there were significant exposures at Berlin and Bloomington. We have diagnosed asbestosis cases (approximately 30) at the Berlin plant. There are several known cases at the Bloomington plant also. It should be pointed out that the cases at the Bloomington plant were generated prior to our acquisition of the facility.

The Califano statement has caused us to review our handling of asbestos exposed Berlin or Bloomington workers who have left our employment either through retirement or quit in regard to notification of the risk of asbestos and the usefulness of having periodic medical examinations.

Several companies who had similar operations were surveyed. These included Johns-Manville, CSG, GAF, Armstrong, Keene, Eagle-Picher, Pabco and O-I. (O-I was the previous Berlin plant owner.) The information source at Johns-Manville was Dr. William Paul, Medical Director. Previous employees are offered at the time of their retirement the option to return to the plant for follow up physical examinations. It is an informal offer and no further follow up is made. This program has been going on for several years. Johns-Manville workers have for several years had education material and presentations for employees currently exposed to asbestos. No other action is planned at this time.

The source of information at CSG was Dr. Joseph Goodman, Medical Director. Previous employees had not been formally instructed concerning the health aspects of asbestos nor are examinations offered after employment has ceased. At the present time there are no plans to carry out an education or examination program for former employees.

At GAF the source of information was Mr. Fassuliotis, Director of Safety Security and Occupational Health. Mr. Fassuliotis indicated that at the present time the company is not carrying out exams of previously exposed workers nor are they planning to carry out any notification or examination of former employees who were exposed to asbestos.

At Armstrong, Mr. Jon W. Tryon, General Manager of Corporate Employee Practices, was the source of information. At the present time they do not plant to notify former employees who were exposed to asbestos since in their experience they have been unable to detect asbestos related disease in their employees.

If they did identify asbestos related disease, they probably would carry out some type of notification or examination program. However, at this time none is planned.

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Mr. Phil Fisk of Keene Corporation was contacted and he indicated that Keene has no recommendation but probably would notify former employees if they could find their names and addresses. They would not offer an examination. He further added that they have identified that they have no legal liability to carry out such a notification.

Eagle-Picher was contacted through Mr. Saxby's office. The informant was Mr. Walter Suhure, General Counsel. Eagle-Picher believes that they had approximately 200 people exposed. At the present time they have no position regarding notification of previously exposed personnel. They are in the process of formulating a position and will inform us.

Pabco Corporation was contacted through Mr. Saxby's group by John Kern. He spoke with Mr. Bob Beck who indicated that the company would not take any action in notifying personnel of previous exposure.

O-I was contacted both by Dan Phillips via Legal Department, and the writer via George Bates, M.D., Medical Director. It was indicated that the Legal Department has not considered the matter in any great depth. They suggested that I talk with Dr. Bates. Dr. Bates indicated it would be very unlikely that O-I would take any action with former employees who worked at the Berlin plant only during the period that O-I had ownership. Dr. Bates indicated that if any change of position took place he would let me know.

Mr. Kreutz and Mr. Brisley both recommend that no action be taken to notify former employees of past exposures or to carry out examinations in this group of employees.

Mr. Saxby indicated that he wishes to be involved in the final decision making process with regard to this matter.

The following is my recommendation concerning notification and examination of individuals who were previously exposed to asbestos either at Berlin or Bloomington:

1. Retirees

Offer continuing examinations periodically at the plant (under very special circumstances arrangements would be made for examination at other locations). The initial invitation would go out by letter to the last known address.

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2. Former employees who worked 10 or more years at the plant but are no longer active employees.

These employees would be handled in the same manner as retirees.

3. Former employees with less than 10 years employment.

These employees would be advised by a letter to last known address that they were exposed to asbestos and this exposure may place them at a higher risk of contracting an asbestos related disease than the general population. Suggest they stop smoking and have an examination by their personal physician as part of their ordinary preventive health maintenance program. If the individual has any questions concerning his exposure he should be directed to talk with the plant physician by 'phone. If his physician has questions or did not receive the government information on asbestos exposure and disease, the physician should call the plant physician.

This pattern of notification would take into account the difference in length of service and a degree of company responsibility.

If you have any questions or comments please let me know.

Jon L. Konzen, M.D.

Jon L. Konzen, M.D.

JLK:mgm
attachments

11 209 0089

BERLIN PLANT

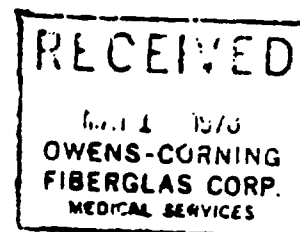
Based on recollection of employment level activity and what is believed to be maximum turnover of people for the years 1958 - 1972, we estimate that the maximum number of people involved and no longer with the company would be a high of 2,000. More realistically it probably approaches 1,000 and there is a chance that we have an address on record for 70 - 80% of those people. It is unlikely that the addresses would be current in 30% of the cases however.

We have 50 prior OCF people on retirement and should be able to reach over 90% of them with addresses on file.

BLOOMINGTON PLANT

Current OCF employees who had exposure to asbestos when it was used in the plant are 26 people, 16 hourly and 10 salary. Estimates that are based on turnovers between April 1970, when we acquired the plant, and the shutdown of the asbestos containing production line in 1972, indicate there would be about 60 people who are no longer with OCF. Addresses should be on file for most of these people but are probably not current. Prior to OCF's acquisition, there are probably another 109 people who were involved with the stainless steel sink operation which was in the same building and would have had general exposure to asbestos in the air. If we were to attempt to quantify the number of employees before OCF acquired the plant from Chembest and their initiation of operations in 1951, we estimate that this could involve 1,000 to 2,000 people. There may be some addresses on record in the old Chembest files.

/jac
5/1/78



11 209 0090

Draft - For employees with 10 or more years of employment.

Dear Former Owens-Corning Berlin Plant Employee:

Within the past few weeks, Joseph Califano, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare announced a program to contact persons who have worked in the past with asbestos, and to notify those persons and all physicians in the United States of the health hazards of working with asbestos. He took this action mainly because of the large number of people who worked with asbestos in shipyards during World War II.

If you have read the reports in the newspapers, you know that it may take many years, sometimes 15, 25, or 35 years, to develop ill effects from asbestos exposure. Asbestosis, a condition of scarring of the lungs, is one disease that can result from exposure to asbestos. Asbestos exposure can also cause a person to have a greater chance of getting lung cancer, possibly intestinal cancer, or a rare type of cancer called mesothelioma. Except for mesothelioma, the chances that a person will get disease from working with asbestos are related to the amount of asbestos he breathed while he worked and the length of time that he worked with asbestos.

Secretary Califano pointed out that the best thing a person can do

to decrease his chances of getting disease from asbestos is to quit smoking. A physical examination to detect the above illnesses in their early stages may help to find the disease when it is in a curable stage, or in an early stage so that medical care can be given to keep the disease from progressing.

11 209 009

You probably already know that you have worked with asbestos in the past, but as a concerned employer, Owens-Corning, wants to take this opportunity to let you know that you have worked in the past with asbestos. We also want to offer you the opportunity to have a physical examination at the Berlin Plant medical facility. If you wish, the results of this examination will be sent to your own private physician.

Please complete the enclosed postcard. If you indicate that you want to have an examination, someone from the plant will contact you concerning the time and other details.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Hite
Owens-Corning Berlin
Plant Manager

11 209 0092

TO:

☐ No, I do not want a physical examination

☐ Yes, I want a physical examination

Name: _____

Address:

Street: _____

City: _____

State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone No. () _____
area code

11 209 0093

Draft - For employees with less than 10 years of employment.

Within the past few weeks, Joseph Califano, the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare announced a program to contact persons who have worked in the past with asbestos, and to notify those persons and all physicians in the United States of the health hazards of working with asbestos. He took this action mainly because of the large number of people who worked with asbestos in shipyards during World War II.

If you have read the reports in the newspapers, you know that it may take many years, sometimes 15, 25, or 35 years, to develop ill effects from asbestos exposure. Asbestosis, a condition of scarring of the lungs, is one disease that can result from exposure to asbestos. Asbestos exposure can also cause a person to have a greater chance of getting lung cancer, possibly intestinal cancer, or a rare type of cancer called mesothelioma. Except for mesothelioma, the chances that a person will get disease from working with asbestos are related to the amount of asbestos he breathed while he worked and the length of time that he worked with asbestos.

Secretary Califano pointed out that the best thing a person can do

to decrease his chances of getting disease from asbestos is to quit smoking. A physical examination to detect the above illnesses in their early stages may help to find the disease when it is in a curable stage, or in an early stage so that medical care can be given to keep the disease from progressing.

11 209 0094

As a concerned employer, Owens-Corning, is taking this opportunity to let you know that you may have worked with asbestos in the past. We want to recommend, as Secretary Califano has recommended, that you contact your personal physician if you have any questions or concerns about your health, for a physical examination, as part of your ongoing health care. If you or your physician have any questions regarding asbestos or its health effects, please contact Dr. John McNally 609-767-3300 at the Owens-Corning Berlin Plant.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Hite
Owens-Corning Berlin
Plant Manager

11 209 0095