

25 September 1962

Mr. H. F. McCabe
Benefits Advisor
California Texas Oil Corporation
380 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. McCabe:

Mr. H. K. Ball of our New York Office has requested that we write you concerning the medical problem raised in the letter from Caltex (Philippines) Incorporated to Mr. W. E. Murray dated August 17, 1962, concerning a Caltex employee whose private physician has claimed he sustained injury or disease from handling tetraethyllead. Said employee apparently blended tetraethyllead between 1954 and 1956 and a claim is being made that exposure to tetraethyllead during this period of time resulted in thrombophlebitis, for which he recently required operative treatment.

Physicians representing the company reportedly have stated their opinion that there was no causal relationship between his work and injury. Apparently all safety precautions were followed so that tetraethyllead intoxication was prevented.

From our experience in producing and handling tetraethyllead for over thirty-five years it is possible to make the following general statements:

(1) In a group of approximately 15,000 lead handlers in United States refineries we have noted no increase in incidence of thrombophlebitis in tetraethyllead handlers over that found in the general population. Incidence of such a condition in a refinery employee who blends tetraethyllead into gasoline is in our opinion purely coincidental.

(2) Even in the occasional cases of individuals who have become ill from entering leaded gasoline storage tanks without using proper equipment and safety procedures, there has been no evidence of thrombophlebitis in our experience or in published

Mr. E. F. McCabe - (2) - 25 September 1962

reports of other observers which we have reviewed.

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Our program for controlling toxicity from handling tetraethyllead has been based primarily upon as nearly absolute containment of the fluid and its vapors as possible until mixed with gasoline, after which the hazard of the gasoline predominates and no additional organic or inorganic lead hazard is found. Refinery employees used as blenders are at no risk except in event of accidental spill. No hazard pay is justified or paid anywhere to our knowledge for work involving tetraethyllead handling.

In our experience, it is frequently necessary for company physicians to disagree with an employee's personal physician who may be expected to have a strong bias in favor of his patient and inadequate knowledge of the true hazards and conditions of work. If we understand the question properly, therefore, we agree with the conclusions reportedly expressed by your medical department and feel sure that the Workmen's Compensation Commission will have little difficulty reaching a proper decision. If the basis of the claim should in fact be a leg injury perhaps resulting from a fall in the plant and later followed by development of phlebitis, it would be an entirely different story.

Please advise your company physician to write us directly, if there is need for further assistance.

Very truly yours,

Frank Princi, M.D.

cc - R. F. P. Detreville, M.D.
Sidney L. Harnox, M.D.
H. H. Ball

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