303

Air test shows no asbestos threat

Air samples from a school district maintenance yard where asbestos shingles were removed improperly last week show no danger to employees, but additional tests are being conducted, a district official said Tuesday.

Of three air samples taken over 3½ hours and examined by a national laboratory, one showed nothing, one had two asbestos fibers and another had one fiber, said Ray E. Willis, public information coordinator for the Clark County School District. The counts are substantially below federal safety levels, he said.

The district will take five more samples over eight hours and submit them to the national laboratory for examination to conform with new federal regulations, Willis said.

The district's own tests taken after 3,000 square feet of asbestos shingles were removed from the bus maintenance yard at Eastern and Stewart avenues Wednesday showed no reason for concern either, said Thurman White, associate superintendent of facilities and transportation.

The air samples were taken by trained district staff and showed only background levels of asbestos particles, about the same levels as exist normally in the outside air, he said.

The inside of the maintenance area, where two shifts of mechanics work, has been cleaned up, White said. The shingles themselves have not yet been disposed of.

The concern about asbestos contamination at the yard began when a district maintenance crew began throwing shingles off the roof of the bus building about noon Wednesday, causing dust to blow everywhere. The district later discovered the shingles were made with asbestos, and that there was the potential of the cancer-causing fibers being released into the air.

Tests thus far indicate the dust being blown about was not from the shingles, but from other material that had collected on the roof over the years.

NV-05 LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL FEBRUARY 3, 1988

Asbestos should only be removed from schools if deteriorating: report

JAPAN TIMES
1/22/88

Fire-retardant asbestos walls and roofs at nationwide public schools should only be removed if the structures have deteriorated to the point that asbestos fibers are being scattered in the surrounding air, a government research team reported Thursday.

The interim report added that careless, random removal of such structures could pose adverse health problems if cancer-causing asbestos fibers were scattered into the environment.

The report, compiled by a Health and Welfare Ministry team headed by Shoichi Fujii, professor emeritus of Shibaura Institute of Technology, studied the health effects of removing asbestos.

According to an Education Ministry report, asbestos was used as a construction material at 1,300 public schools nationwide.

While work has already started to replace school walls and roofs containing the substance, with Thursday's report the ministry will instruct local governments to take appropriate measures to prevent asbestos air pollution where the construction is under way.

The report concluded that if asbestos-containing walls and roofs are kept in good condition, the density of asbestos in the air is almost the same level as that of normal air, while removal of such structures could raise the level of the carcinogenic substance.

Only when the walls become scratched or broken due to age or other reasons, should they be removed, the report said.

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JAN/FEB 1988

ATA not necessarily effective, survey says

Independent truckers quizzed on topics such as the base-state fuel use tax, the ban on asbestos brakes, the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986 and similar issues, came down squarely on the side of the American Trucking Associations' (ATA's) position on most of those issues. That's the result of an August 1987 survey of independent truckers commissioned by Associates Commercial Corp.

On the issue of the ban of asbestos brakes by the EPA, the drivers' attitudes were somewhat wait-and-see, although 60.4% gave the idea a "fair" to "excellent" rating.

HWBUI0006263

MI-D14 DETROIT FREE PRESS JANUARY 28, 1988

U.S. checks asbestos levels at Chrysler brake plant

BY MARCIA STEPANEK
Free Press Washington Staff

WASHINGTON — Federal health officials are investigating Chrysler Motors Corp.'s Trenton brake factory for possible asbestos contamination and asbestos-related illness among the plant's more than 180 workers, according to copies of test reports and interviews with company and government officials.

No conclusions have been made about the potential health threat to asbestos brake workers. But two reports sent to Chrysler by investigators during the past three months indicate concern about asbestos levels in settled dust samples from the plant.

A Dec. 4 report from the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health to plant manager Carl Lancucki urged Chrysler to take 14 immediate steps to limit workers' exposure to asbestos, a substance that may cause cancer or respiratory problems.

> **"Chrysler Motors is vitally concerned that working conditions at the plant do not cause illness or injury to employes."**
>
> LEE NORTHARD
> Chrysler Motors spokesman

Chrysler has already implemented several of the cleanup recommendations, spokesman Lee Northard said. "Chrysler Motors is vitally concerned that working conditions at the plant do not cause illness or injury to employes," he said. "We're reviewing all of the recommendations and already have implemented some and will implement all required by law."

One federal, dated Oct. 22 and based on two "walk-throughs" of the facility last year by NIOSH investigators, said "workers are handling asbestos and asbestos products in a way which will produce the potential of overexposure."

Results of medical tests conducted last November by the federal investigators on more than 180 people, including 35 mid-level managers and 15 retirees, are still being analyzed, said John Bainbridge, deputy director of NIOSH's Division of Surveillance, Hazard Evaluations and Field Studies.

Bainbridge said testing for respiratory ailments and asbestosis — inflammation of the lungs, poor breathing and circulation — continues on some retirees. Also, more air samples of the plant will be taken this month and next.

Bainbridge has urged Chrysler to better ensure that all workers are fully monitored for asbestos exposure, that in-house samples of factory air are taken more regularly, and that all workers are provided with appropriate safety gear.

"In our opinion," Bainbridge wrote, "the current oversight of this effort by the labor relations and personnel departments, with remote support and input by the corporate hygiene staff, is disjointed and ineffective. ... This is evident in the continued use of brooms to sweep asbestos-laden dust, smoking at work stations and the nonchalant attitude toward respirator usage in the plant."

Don Lingar, president of UAW Local 372, which requested the federal investigation last January, said conditions at the plant have improved since December. "People are wearing respirators where they never were wearing them in the past, they're now wearing coveralls where they never did in the past," Lingar said. "They've taken all the fans out of the plant, so the dust isn't flying around so bad."

The federal standard requires that breathing air in all industrial facilities contain no more than 0.2 fibers of asbestos per cubic centimeter of air.

"The bone of contention is how high are levels of asbestos exposure and, secondly, is the current standard sufficient," Bainbridge said. "It could be that Chrysler is in compliance with the standard but that workers are still being exposed.... We won't know until we've completed the testing."

50A-132D FAMILY PRACTICE NEWS JANUARY 14, 1988

Little Evidence Linking Asbestos, Laryngeal Ca

ATLANTA — There is very little substantive evidence linking asbestos exposure with laryngeal cancer, Dr. Charles K. Chan said in a poster presentation at the annual scientific assembly of the American College of Chest Physicians.

Asbestos clearly has been implicated as the cause of many cases of lung cancer, mesothelioma, and asbestosis, as well as other malignancies. But the evidence linking it to laryngeal cancer is limited. Most studies have not taken into account cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption, both of which are highly prevalent among asbestos workers, said Dr. Chan, of Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven.

In a review of the literature on the subject, Dr. Chan cited several studies documenting that smoking and alcohol consumption are the primary environmental causes of laryngeal cancer. Results of studies also have revealed a synergistic effect between the two factors; a 1-pack-a-day smoker who also drinks a moderate amount of alcohol has a 20 times greater risk for the neoplasm.

Many of the case-control studies showing a link between asbestos exposure and laryngeal cancer did not adjust for cigarette smoking and alcohol drinking. In five studies that did adjust for these factors, no significant increases in risk from asbestos exposure alone were found, Dr. Chan reported.

No excess deaths from laryngeal cancer were observed in several cohort studies and longitudinal surveys. However, in a birth cohort of 11,379 miners exposed to chrysotile fiber in Quebec, there was a dose-response relationship among deaths due to laryngeal cancer and to smoking. The standardized mortality ratio in nonsmokers exposed to asbestos was 0.46 and in moderate smokers it was 0.93. In heavy smokers the ratio went up to 4.85.

There were similar linear exposure-response relationships found for asbestos with lung cancer and for pneumoconiosis, Dr. Chan said.

His associate in this study was Dr. J. Bernard L. Gee.

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