

FILE NAME: Phenolic Resins (PHR)

DATE: 1979 Feb 2

DOC#: PHR023

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: GE Memo - Medical Evaluation of GENAL Asbestos-Free Brochures from Dr. Taylor

asbestos

GENERAL  ELECTRIC

PLASTICS BUSINESS DIVISION

February 2, 1979

ONE PLASTICS AVENUE
PITTSFIELD, MASS. 01201



PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT

Mr. H. J. Singer
Office

Attached for your review is a medical opinion on the new GENAL brochures that I requested from Dr. Taylor. Dr. Taylor has taken the adversary approach from the medical viewpoint which I believe to be constructive and I am submitting it to you for your consideration.

GHH:eh

G. H. Hiner

Att.

cc: AA Matthews
PR Pluta
WJ Taylor
RC Wright

MEDICAL
FEB - 5 1979

January 23, 1979

JAN 26 1979

G. H. HINER

Mr. G. Hiner
Office

Subject: Medical Evaluation of GENAL Asbestos Free Brochures

I expect the first reaction of the average person to the attached brochures would be that GE has done a very good thing to eliminate asbestos from its products, starting in 1972; and that GENAL certainly is a better product to purchase than competitive phenolics containing asbestos. The brochures are very effective marketing tools.

However, there is a major problem and risk to PBD in using this advertising and sales approach. While we can be proud that we stopped using asbestos in 1972, how do we justify our use before 1972 when the suggestion that a relationship existed between asbestos and cancer was made in 1935 and confirmed in 1955? We lay ourselves open to attack on issues such as:

- Why did we continue to use asbestos when it was a known health risk?
- What have our medical examinations on exposed workers shown (PBD did not do exams religiously or at all over the years)?
- What special efforts is PBD making for retired exposed workers?
- What efforts have we made to track down and inform/examine workers exposed long ago who have left GE or transferred to other organizations?
- What has GE done for exposed workers who have died of asbestos induced cancer and their families?

Any of these issues could potentially give us very negative publicity in spite of the fact that we are doing a better job than our competitors. On a relative scale we are doing fine. On an absolute scale, our performance leaves much to be desired. Consider that

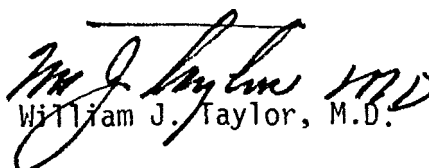
- Asbestos exposure in industry is one of the most serious issues facing American industry today. Heavy exposure to asbestos may lead to a related death rate of approximately 46%. Disease follows exposure by a period of 15-20 years. The disease that follows (cancer of the lung, pleura or peritoneum) is fatal. No effective therapy exists. Cessation of use in 1972 does not relieve the issue of dangerous exposure to workers and consumers in 1965, for instance.

Mr. G. Hiner
January 23, 1979

-2-

- All MD's in the nation have received a Physician's Advisory Letter describing the effects of asbestos exposure (see attachment #1).
- All Social Security recipients have received such an advisory letter from the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.
- A national TV campaign stating the dangers of asbestos exposure is being planned.
- A \$20,000,000 out of court settlement has been made to 455 asbestos workers and more are predicted to come (see attachment #2).

In my view, the risks outweigh the benefits and my recommendation would be to discontinue this marketing strategy. I would use the "asbestos free" approach verbally with purchasing agents and molders. I would not use it in media advertising, on truck sides or in our mailing campaigns.


William J. Taylor, M.D.

-W
Attach.