



Postponement

In the notice, the agency said it decided to postpone the effective date for the preservatives to avoid different labeling requirements for chemicals of registrants who have or have not challenged the cancellation effort.

A separate notice will be published at least 90 days before a new date is set, the agency said.

According to EPA, 59 registrants who would have been required to implement label changes for 425 products are exempt from the action because they have filed administrative challenges. Those products may continue to be sold with current labels; another 25 registrants have applied to amend registrations of about 50 products, the notice said.

In addition, the notice advised states and federal agencies which have not amended applicator certification plans to cover the wood preservative to make the changes "as soon as possible." A 60-day time limit was set from publication of the notice for the agency to receive reports of the plans.

EPA also said it will establish a wood preservatives commercial applicator subcategory in certification programs it administers and that it will "also review its existing programs to determine if it is possible to allow some types of wood preservatives application under existing commercial categories."

Asbestos

NEW JERSEY DRAFT POLICY SUGGESTS LEVELS FOR REMOVAL, WORKER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

In what appears to be a precedent setting move, the state of New Jersey released a draft of a comprehensive policy for deciding when asbestos abatement action is needed in a school or other building. The draft also sets out a plan for comprehensive, mandatory training of asbestos removal workers, sets specifications for conducting abatement operations, and calls for controlling asbestos in drinking water.

The draft suggests that some type of action to abate asbestos in a building should be taken if the air level in occupied areas is 100 nanograms (one-billionth of a gram) per cubic meter of air, an amount equal to about 0.003 fibers per cubic centimeter. This level is 660 times lower than the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's worker exposure limit of 2 f/cc and 165 times lower than the proposed OSHA workplace limit of 0.5 f/cc.

The document calls for an asbestos management program whenever asbestos is present in building materials in quantities above 1 percent, regardless of the air level. It also notes that removal of asbestos when it is unnecessary can create a greater hazard than if the asbestos is left untouched.

The draft was released by Gov. Thomas H. Kean. It was prepared by an asbestos policy committee, appointed in January to study asbestos hazards and develop a coordinated policy on addressing them. A final policy report on asbestos will be completed by the end of 1984 and the recommendations will be set out as regulations, Kean said.

The draft policy was called a "model for all," including the federal Environmental Protection Agency. "It's reasonable and very well thought out," a spokesman for an asbestos industry group said.

EPA has been working on a hazard assessment policy that would help determine when asbestos abatement is needed. The agency, under a law establishing grants and loans for asbestos abatement in schools, also is attempting to write contractor certification guidelines (Current Report, Oct. 26, p. 851).

Asbestos Action Guideline

The draft sets out an "Asbestos Evaluation Decision Protocol" for determining whether asbestos is present in a building and whether abatement action is needed. According to the document, there should be a physical observation to see if asbestos may be present. Bulk sampling of both friable and non-friable materials that may contain asbestos should be done, and laboratory tests performed to determine if asbestos comprises 1 percent or more of the suspect material. If it does not, no action is needed. If it does, air levels must be monitored to determine if the asbestos exceeds 100 ng/m³.

If levels exceed 100 ng and the condition of the materials is "bad," remediation should be undertaken. If the condition is bad but the level is below 100 mg/m³, then action should be determined on a case-by-case basis, and should range from a management program at a minimum to removal.

If the condition of the materials is good and the level below 100 ng/m³, an asbestos management program should be undertaken. If the condition is good but the air level is above the 100 ng level, the area should be re-surveyed because asbestos is probably coming from an unrecognized source, the document said.

Training, Removal Specifications

The draft also calls for all asbestos removal workers to receive a 32-hour training course, successfully complete an examination before certification, and learn about adverse effects of asbestos. In addition, asbestos workers must complete a course that includes "hands on" instruction regarding use of respirators and on equipment and procedures for controlling airborne asbestos during removal operations.

According to the draft, all asbestos workers would have to carry a photo identification that showed they had been trained.

The document also proposes specifications for conducting actual removal operations, including pre-removal and removal. It discusses all phases of preparation, conduct, and cleanup of asbestos abatement operations. It calls for notification before beginning removal, documentation that all workers on the job have received the state-required training, and sets out steps that must be taken during all phases of the operation.

The document also calls for sampling water supplies for asbestos and for banning new uses of asbestos cement pipe in water delivery systems.

Copies of the draft document are available for a fee from BNA's Research and Special Projects Division, (202) 452-RSPD.

Biotechnology

PROGRESS MADE IN THE 1970s THREATENED UNLESS CONGRESS PAYS ATTENTION TO FIELD

HOUSTON — (By a BNA Staff Correspondent) — Unless Congress pays more attention to the field of biotechnology, progress made in developing the genetic engineering industry in the 1970s will be threatened, according to Robert Nicholas, staff director of the House Science Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight.

Congressional oversight in recent years has focused on the commercialization of biotechnology products, not health and safety, he told the semiannual meeting of the Chemical Manufacturers Association Oct. 29.