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ASBESTOS

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Industrial Hygiene Department's program, the Bralsblok plants have been analyzed for their possible hazards to employees. Asbestos studies have been carried out periodically. According to Jim Holtaway and Henry Gotmer, we have never had any findings indicating inadequate control over our handling of asbestos. Management has been aware of the occupational hazards associated with this material.

In the April 6, 1964 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association, there was an article by I. J. Selikoff, M.D., J. Churg, M.D. and E.C. Hammond, D.Sc. on "Asbestos Exposure and Neoplasia." It is this same group and the findings described in this article which has prompted the numerous newspaper articles which so many of us are reading. On the basis of their study, it would appear that there is an added relationship between cancer of the lungs, pleura, stomach, colon and rectum in individuals who have been asbestos workers for 20 or more years. These workers would be those with frequent and prolonged exposures not adequately controlled, as perhaps in asbestos mining and insulation workers (building trades).

In this select group of workers, these authors found 6.8 times as much cancer of the lung and pleura as in the general U.S. male population. They were not able to ascertain the smoking habits of these men. In general, it is felt, as you probably know, that among our male population the lung cancer death rate is 10 times as high among cigarette smokers as non smokers. At any rate these authors stated that their data "would not necessarily apply to asbestos exposure in other industries, such as the factory production of asbestos products, the asbestos textile industry, etc., where conditions of employment might be quite different."