

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

TRIP REPORT

Subject: Vinyl Chloride Exposure Problems
Place: MCA Offices, Washington, D. C.
Date: January 25, 1974
Attended by: L. J. Schuman, F. Kennedy

The emergency meeting was called to allow B. F. Goodrich to fully explain the health safety problem at the Louisville, Ky., PVC plant (you have copies of the handout we received and the WST press report).

The environmental health offices stated that in the summer of '73 indications of higher incidences of liver problems at the plant were observed. Everyone exposed to VCM (271 people) were given SMA-12 tests (1/4 of the data relate directly to liver function). Anything not exactly within the normal range was called abnormal; 55 of the 271 were classified abnormal. There are 2, 3, or 4 (all have 22-25 yrs. service) of the 55 under deep suspicion as being on the pathway to a tumor.

The three workers who died in the last 2 years were 49 years old (24 yrs. service), 38 years old (16 yrs. service), 58 years old (29 yrs. service) and a fourth, 43 (19 yrs. service, death certificate - liver cancer). The first three definitely were due to angiosarcoma. Angiosarcoma was primary to liver and is multi foci. Angiosarcoma is the type noted in the European rat tests at 250-800 ppm of VCM exposure levels. All workers were in polymerization operations for at least 10 years, then moved on to the dryer building. A prime 31 year old suspect has had only 7 years with the company, 4 years in polymerization and 3 in compounding.

Goodrich is surveying the records of the Niagra plant (closed several years ago) and the Avon Lake plant. All three plants are probably the oldest PVC plants in the U.S. and likely the least well-ventilated in the polymerization sheds.

The blood tests of the 271 workers are being repeated along with a control of 270 workers from the Goodrich BD rubber plant. Plant employees informed as well as possible.

In the Louisville plant, the TWA is generally 15-20 ppm with some excursions above 50 ppm. The sheds have 6 air turnovers per hour and 20 at emergency level. Accountability of VCM is now over 98%; until monitoring program, 5-6% loss was observed.

The preliminary results of the European animal exposure study were given NIOSH by Dr. Duffield of ICI last week. Marcus Key, director of NIOSH said that without European data, the epidemiology incomplete study and the Goodrich data, "hysteria" would have resulted. NIOSH is very much involved, will not act without reason. OSHA will hold a one day hearing, February 15, related to exposure of workers to VCM. FDA and the Cancer Research Institute are also clamoring for information, but still on a low key level.

MCA transmitted a letter to NIOSH, January 25, reconfirming MCA intent to provide data to NIOSH as quickly as they become available and inferred (by telephone) NIOSH should handle the problem and not allow FDA or Cancer Research Institute to become the prime investigator. The problem is clearly NIOSH domain.

A meeting among L. N. Vernon, K. L. Schurter, L. J. Schuman, E. M. Smith, R. D. Gamblin, G. F. Tillson, and F. Kennedy was held January 29 to discuss the January 25 MCA meeting. As a result of the meeting, the following steps were taken:

- 1) All plant employees should be advised of the Goodrich problem and what steps Conoco Chemicals will take.
- 2) All employees at the affected plants will be given SMA-12 tests. According to Dr. Chuck Whitestone, SMA-12 tests are the blood tests currently given to the employees at the plants.
- 3) Portable detection equipment will be obtained promptly to identify plant problem areas and indicate actual exposure levels. R. E. Laramie is the Ponca City contact, Ext. 8334.
- 4) Monitoring equipment will be installed where appropriate to record levels of VCM continuously.
- 5) F. Kennedy will coordinate the activities.


F. Kennedy

kloc
1-30-74

cc: RWG, JDBu, JJL, JDBr, AJL, KLS, LNV, WRS, EAS, REL, RLL, LJS
OCK, WRBe, AJLu