Monsanto

PCB/File

FROM (NAME & LOCATION) David Wood-St. Louis-B2SD

DATE July 28, 1976 CC

SUBJECT PCB SPILL NOTIFICATION
NASA HEADQUARTERS
REFERENCE WASHINGTON, D.C. 7/27/76

TO :

T. H. Lafferre-B2SB
C. Paton-B2SK
J. J. Zeman-B2SK
W. W. Withers/H. N. Brandstetter-B2SA
G. J. Levinskas-A2SC
J. C. Weber-B2SK
P. Heisler-1740
W. Easley-1920
D. R. Bishop-B1ND

Paul Heisler alerted us at 11:15 A.M. that he had received a call from Chemtrec requesting that we contact a Mr. Blakney, Chief Operator, Washington, D. C. Fire Department (202)462-1616 concerning a fire involving askarel transformers. Mr. Blakney advised that at 9:18 A.M. a fire had broken out in a sub-basement transformer room in the headquarters of NASA, 400 Maryland Avenue S. W. and that in dealing with the fire, nine firemen had been overcome by fumes and admitted to Washington Hospital Center (202)541-6701, where they were being treated by Dr. Robert Dyer, Chief Surgeon, of the Fire Department. They had found out that the transformers were Pyranol units made by G. E., Rome, and there were glass bottles in the transformer area marked Askarel EBB. They asked for effects of askarel at high temperatures. I contacted George Levinskas who undertook to have one of our physicians call Dr. Dyer.

The transformer in question, Serial No. C863272A, was still leaking.

I advised Mr. Blakney to have catch trays put under the leaking transformer and gave preliminary instructions for clean-up procedure including a warning to avoid breathing the vapors at elevated temperatures, the wearing of protective clothing and appropriate disposal of any absorbents used in cleaning up the fluid. Fortunately, there are no drains in the transformer vault and foam and dry powder extinguishing agents were used. The Washington Fire Department will advise the E.P.A. of the PCB spill.

G. E. Contacts

Ed Simons, G. E., Schenectady, and Ray Frahm, G. E., Rome, have been notified of the situation. Ray Frahm will be contacting Mr. Blakney to offer G. E. assistance in clean-up procedures.

Dan Bishop in St. Louis and John Hussey in Washington PR have been advised. Warren Easley has also been notified.

Medical Department will issue a report of the conversation with the Washington Hospital Center.

UPI tickertape reported the fire at 11:16 A.M. and reported that due to complete power loss, all NASA headquarters personnel have been granted leave of absence for the remainder of the day and, also, for the 28th, if power is not restored. For further information, editors and correspondents were advised to contact the Space Flight Center (202)755-3090, since all headquarters telephones are out of service. I think this information pertained more to people wanting to get update reports on the Viking Space Mission rather than people wanting input on the fire at headquarters.

David Wood

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