

The Society of the
Plastics Industry, Inc.



355 Lexington Avenue
New York, New York 10017
(212) 573 9400

June 6, 1977

SP
TO: PVC FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Our meeting on June 15-16 promises to be educational and to stimulate thinking and discussion. We have arranged for leaders in fire research to describe to us current concerns and programs relating to combustion toxicity of PVC and other polymers.

Dr. Victor Esch is Chief of Surgery with the District of Columbia Fire Department. Dr. Esch has stated that PVC, of all the plastic polymers, has been primarily implicated in causing the most serious problem in fire fighting today due to Hcl release during combustion. A controversial article written by Dr. Esch which appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association is enclosed. The article has been widely reproduced. A comment on Dr. Esch's article and his response is also enclosed.

Dr. Meritt Birky is responsible for the National Bureau of Standards program to develop a bioassay protocol to evaluate life safety hazards relating to combustion products from burning materials. It is believed that the protocol the Bureau will propose ultimately will become referenced by building codes and other regulatory bodies.

Dr. Irving Einhorn is Director of the Flammability Research Center, University of Utah, and is a leading researcher on combustion toxicology. Attached for information are the abstracts of papers given last year at Utah's Symposium on Toxicity. In particular note the number of papers presented by Utah personnel under Einhorn's direction. Under an NBS funded program, the Flammability Research Center has evaluated 140 commercially significant polymeric materials for toxicity review.

The program offers a unique opportunity to help understand combustion toxicity and the role of PVC: how others view us and what the information seems to be telling us so we can plan for the future.

Very truly yours,

John R. Lawrence

John R. Lawrence
Technical Director

JRL:LH
Enclosures

cc: PVC Communications Committee Members
PVC Health Committee Members
PVC Safety Group Committee Members
Einhorn
Esch
Birky
Blair

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agenda

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PVC FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE

June 15, 1977
2 p.m.

Marriott Twin Bridges
Washington, DC

A full afternoon and evening devoted to combustion toxicity of polymers:

What are we doing?;

What is being said about us?;

What is the Federal Government doing?;

What does leading university research indicate about products of combustion?

2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

John Blair

DuPont, Chairman SPI CCCS
Committee--SPI Fire Toxicology
Programs

Victor Esch, M.D.

Chief of Surgery, Board of
Police and Fire Surgeons,
Washington, DC--Concerns/Findings
of the Fire Community

Dr. Meritt Birky

National Bureau of Standards
Fire Toxicology

5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Dinner

(on your own)

7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Dr. Irving Einhorn

Shirley Savage
University of Utah, Flammability
Research Center--Toxicity of
Combustion Products; Scoping the
Role of PVC.

8:30 p.m.

Questions & Discussion

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PVC FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE

June 16, 1977
9 a.m.

Marriott Twin Bridges
Washington, DC

9 a.m. - 12 noon

- I) Self-Introduction
- II) Approval of Minutes of March 8, 1977 Meeting
- III) Committee Reports
 - . Conduit Subcommittee -- D. L. Kent
 - . Technical Subcommittee -- J. F. Banzer
 - . Uses Subcommittee -- J. D. Tanzilli
 - . Steering Committee -- G. J. Mantell
- IV) Symposium Reports
 - . Workshop on Flame/Smoke/Toxicity, and Corrosive Gases of Electrical Cables -- A. S. Ambrose
 - . Polymeric Materials in Transportation - Polytechnic Institute of New York, April 27-29
-- J. D. Tanzilli
- V) Discussion Period
 - . Impressions/Ramifications of Previous Day's Presentation
-- Open Discussion
 - . Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire: SPI view of how plastics industry should react
-- J. R. Lawrence
 - . Future Action

12 noon - 1 p.m.

Lunch

1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

Wrap-up Session & Future Plans

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R N WHEELER JR.

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