

Assistant Secretary of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

August 24, 1971

Director  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Emerging Problems Report



It has recently come to my attention that three plants included in NIOSH's asbestos study have excessively high concentrations of asbestos fibers--a situation which has very serious health implications.

Two of the three plants have amosite asbestos insulation operations and the third is a chrysotile asbestos textile operation. Exposures have been going on for some time and at these high levels of exposures, cases of asbestosis and/or neoplasm are likely to occur. State occupational health agencies have been notified, although not as promptly as I would have liked, and each State concerned is taking necessary enforcement action under Section 18(h) agreements. We have almost completed X-ray survey at one plant, and by fall we should have chest X-rays and readings on workers at all three plants. If you wish, we will make available the environmental data from our asbestos surveys.

We are in the process of looking at all of our field studies to see if there are other situations which should be called to your attention.

Marcus M. Key, M.D.  
Assistant Surgeon General

MMK:kch