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CARBIDE**

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

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A. G. VORESS

UC 149-2

CHEMICALS AND PLASTICS

P. O. BOX 671, TEXAS CITY, TEXAS 77590

TO (NAME) Mr. J. E. Beckman
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DATE March 13, 1979

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SUBJECT Texas City NIOSH/OSHA Issue

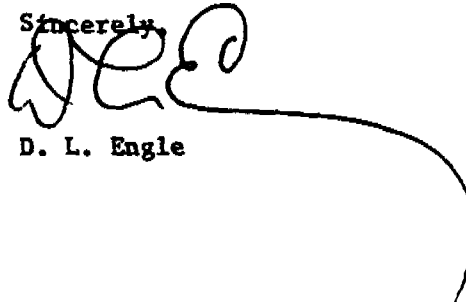
Gentlemen:

Attached are some press items which you may not have seen. Please circulate to others as you feel appropriate.

Our next update for employees will appear in tomorrow's issue of THE FORECASTER and we will mail you a marked copy.

Also attached is a clip from today's HOUSTON POST regarding a State Health Department investigation. We don't have all the problems.

Sincerely,



D. L. Engle

DLE/gt
Attachments

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NEWS DIGEST

Tumor Deaths Investigated

TEXAS CITY, Texas (UPI) — Industrial health investigators are checking 15 brain tumor deaths among vinyl chloride workers at two plants, officials said Tuesday.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration was investigating 10 deaths at Union Carbide Corp., where vinyl chloride is still handled. Monsanto Inc., which no longer handles the chemical, disclosed five brain tumor deaths.

Federal medical detectives have linked vinyl chloride to a cancerous brain tumor called glioblastoma multiforme. OSHA was surveying the records of 10,000 past and present Union Carbide workers on the basis of an employee inquiry.

HARLINGEN 3-7-79

Brownsville Herald

VSVILLE HERALD—Sunday, February 18, 1979—PAGE 13A

Houston Carbide Plant Is Probed

HOUSTON (UPI) — Federal health officials say an unusually high number of workers at Union Carbide's Texas City plant have died of a type of brain tumor linked to the cancer-causing agent vinyl chloride, according to The Houston Post.

In a copyrighted article today, the Post said the substance once was manufactured and now is processed at the large chemical and plastics plant.

A Labor Department official said scientists associate the

W.W. "Bill" McManus, plant manager of the Union Carbide Chemicals and Plastics Division at the Port of Brownsville, said Friday that vinyl chloride is not used at the local plant nor ever has been.

"I think very fortunately that neither we, OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) or NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) know of any products we manufacture or use in this plant, except for a few laboratory agents kept in a special place, that are carcinogenic," McManus said.

The Brownsville plant, he said, produces acetic acid and acetic anhydride for use in the manufacture of aspirin, paints, solvents and plastics, among other products.

chemical with a cancerous tumor known as glioblastoma multiform. The Post said it learned medical certificates from at least nine Texas City workers who died between 1962 and 1978 listed that type of tumor as the cause of death.

In addition, federal authorities told the newspaper a 10th plant employee still living has been diagnosed as "probably" having the same form of tumor.

Health records of current and former Texas City plant workers, 8,000 to 10,000 persons, are being researched by scientists working for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

"The company feels this is not a crisis that poses any immediate exposure hazards for current employees," said plant manager Damon Engle. "Practically all of the affected employees worked for substantial periods of time from the mid-40s through the present in a period in which neither the government nor the company had any reason to suspect vinyl chloride."

He said the company is not ready to accept the OSHA suggestion that vinyl chloride is responsible for the deaths.

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The Houston Post/Tues., March 13, 1979

State probing school's cancer deaths

By HAROLD SCARLETT
Post Environment Writer

The State Department of Health is investigating what may be a high rate of leukemia deaths among 1964-74 graduates of a Port Neches high school near two plants which manufacture synthetic rubber.

Dr. Raymond T. Moore, state health commissioner, said Monday his epidemiologists may have some initial findings in a week or 10 days.

The state investigation was requested by a Beaumont attorney, William E. Townsley, who is representing several workers in leukemia lawsuits against Beaumont area plants.

Townsley told the state health chief he has turned up four leukemia deaths among ex-students at the Port Neches-Groves High School. He said there may be other leukemia deaths of which he is unaware.

The attorney said his research indicates there should have been not more than one leukemia death in the ex-student group.

Moore said the number of leukemia deaths appears to be too small for statis-

tical significance, but "we are going to take a look at it and see what, if anything, we find."

The high school is about eight blocks from the adjoining BFGoodrich and Texas-U.S. Chemical Co. plants, which process styrene and butadiene for manufacturing synthetic rubber.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has been investigating the incidence of leukemia among workers at the two plants since 1976.

A 1977 NIOSH publication listed styrene and butadiene as a "confirmed" cause of leukemia, Townsley said.

The Goodrich plant manager, D.T. Boumans, disputed Townsley's implication that the plant is a community health hazard.

"The plant and its operations are the subject of a continuing study by NIOSH, which has not yet reported any carcinogen problems connected with plant employment," Boumans said in a prepared statement.

"Therefore, it is unlikely that there are problem areas outside the plant."

He said Goodrich would cooperate in the state study and provide investigators with employee medical records if

requested.

Officials of Texas-U.S. Chemical were unavailable for comment.

Townsley, in a letter which reached Moore on Friday, said he had also found four cases of Hodgkin's disease among the high school's graduates.

Hodgkin's disease is a rare form of lymph cancer that, like leukemia, affects the blood and causes anemia.

The attorney, conceding he is not a trained epidemiologist, said he concluded the high school's leukemia rate was abnormal on the basis of cancer data supplied by an epidemiologist at Houston's M.D. Anderson Hospital.

He said the data included statewide leukemia rates during 1972-76 and specific records for Jefferson County and comparable age groups.

The four leukemia victims, all males, graduated from the high school in 1964, 1966, 1968 and 1974, Townsley said, and the most recent death occurred "only a few weeks ago."

Townsley estimated that the school graduated 2,500 to 3,000 male students during the 1964-74 period.

The attorney said he discussed the situation with Dr. Marcus Key, a profes-

sor of occupational medicine at the University of Texas School of Public Health in Houston.

The attorney said it was Key, a former director of NIOSH, who suggested he request a state epidemiology study, perhaps in cooperation with the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

"I did look at his data, and it struck me that four cases of leukemia among recent graduates seemed on the high side," Key said Monday. "It may be a fluke, but I think it should be looked at."

Dr. Oliver P. Monk, superintendent of the Port Neches Independent School District, pointed out that Jefferson County is said to have one of the highest cancer rates in the nation.

"I don't know whether there's a higher leukemia incidence here than in any other high school in Jefferson County or Harris County," he said. "Certainly, if there is a problem, we want to know about it."

Monk said that from 1943 until a move in 1953, the high school was even closer to the two chemical plants than it is now. Both plants date from World War II.

"We have kids who actually live closer to the plants than the school is," he said.

U.S. to check work records back to '41 in vinyl chloride probe

BY CARLOS BYARS
Chronicle Science Writer

Federal officials trying to determine if exposure to vinyl chloride may have led to the deaths of 14 employees at two Texas City chemical plants will dig into thousands of employee records dating back to 1941.

Nine workers at the Union Carbide plant died of a rare form of brain cancer that has been linked to vinyl chloride. Five employees at a Monsanto plant may have died from the same type of cancer.

Investigators hope to determine if any other former employees may have been victims of the cancer.

Vinyl chloride previously has been linked to liver cancer. But whether it is relat-

ed to a brain tumor called glioblastoma multiforme, the cause of death of the Union Carbide workers, is in dispute.

It is used in thousands of plastic products, including electrical insulation and car seat upholstery. Several plants in Harris County manufacture it.

Union Carbide, in Galveston County, still produces vinyl chloride. Monsanto formerly produced the chemical but ceased about 10 years ago.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health will investigate whether the Union Carbide employee deaths were related to vinyl chloride exposure and whether the number of deaths is excessive.

Monsanto is conducting an investigation in cooperation with the federal Occupa-

tional Safety and Health Administration.

Dr. Sanford Leffingwell of the Occupational Safety and Health Institute's Cincinnati laboratory says one study will focus on the work history of a group of Union Carbide employees to see if there is a difference in exposure to various chemicals.

"We hope this will lead to identification of the (cancer causing) agent in the plant," Leffingwell says.

The same study also will seek to estimate how many cases of the rare brain tumor should occur in a normal population of the same size. Leffingwell says his guess is that there have been more cases than normal.

This study is expected to take about six months.

At the same time, the institute will be trying to establish the status of everyone who worked at the plant for a year or more since it was opened in 1941.

"We want to find out if they are living or dead and what they died of," he says.

This study, expected to take about a year, also could turn up other work-related causes of death, he says.

Damon Engle, manager of the Union Carbide plant, says the possible relationship between vinyl chloride and other illnesses, including this form of brain tumor, was noted in a study sponsored by 29 members of the Manufacturing Chemists Association, a trade organization of producers or users of the chemical.

The study was one of the research projects started after the discovery in

1973 that vinyl chloride can cause liver cancer.

Engle says Union Carbide spent \$1.2 million on controlling leaks and emissions of vinyl chloride chemicals and has met federal standards for exposure to the chemical since early 1975.

About 160 employees out of 2,200 at the plant on a regular basis work in areas where vinyl chloride is used, he says.

Engle feels that the cases turning up now are the results of exposure to chemicals in the 1950s and '60s and are being found in the course of the long-term studies started during the liver-cancer scare.

Although Union Carbide employees are the target of the studies discussed by Leffingwell, Monsanto employees also

will be surveyed, a company spokesman says.

John Spano of Monsanto's St. Louis headquarters says the company began examining employee records after learning of the Union Carbide cases.

"Five deaths are being studied as suspected of being caused by brain tumors or malignancies. These are not confirmed cases, just suspected," he says.

Spano says the company will cooperate with government officials in "a massive program of review of employee records to determine if there were any incidents of brain cancer among employees."

The records search may go back 30 years and involve more than 5,000 employees, he says.

Pasadena woman files suit against Union Carbide

GALVESTON, Texas (AP) — A \$1 million damage suit has been filed against Union Carbide Corp. by the wife of a man who died of a brain tumor.

The suit filed Thursday is believed to be the first since a federal study made public last month linked brain tumors with vinyl chloride fumes.

Doris Stiles of Pasadena filed the suit in behalf of herself and two children. Her husband, James Harvey Stiles Jr., 51, died in 1974. The lawsuit says Stiles worked for Union Carbide from 1946 until his death. The suit contends death resulted from exposure "to caustic chemicals, including but not limited to vinyl chloride."

The federal study linked vinyl chloride with the brain tumor glioblastoma multiforme and reported 10 brain tumor deaths among workers at the Texas City plant of Union Carbide between 1962 and 1978. Death certificates for six of the 10 were said to have listed glioblastoma multiforme as the cause of death.

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\$1-million suit filed in brain tumor death

By JOEL KIRKPATRICK
News Staff Writer

A lawsuit seeking \$1 million in damages and contending vinyl chloride fumes caused a brain tumor which led to the death of James Harvey Stiles Jr. has been filed against Union Carbide Corp. by Stiles' surviving wife and children.

The lawsuit was filed Thursday afternoon in 56th District Court in Galveston under the Texas wrongful death and survival law.

The plaintiffs, Doris Stiles and her children,

contend Stiles was employed by Union Carbide in Texas City from 1946 until the time of his death on July 19, 1974.

The suit seeks to prove "that the death of the deceased was proximately caused by exposure to chemical fumes including but not limited to vinyl chloride which induced a brain tumor..."

The plaintiffs contend that at the time of Stiles' death they were not aware of the cause of his death, which "has only recently been discovered to have

been caused by exposure to vinyl chloride fumes as well as other chemical fumes over a period of time."

Mrs. Stiles contends that the defendant Union Carbide Corp. knew or should have known that vinyl chloride and its fumes and the fumes of other chemicals were hazardous to the health of her husband.

According to the suit, the plaintiffs "believe the defendant purposely withheld such knowledge from its employees and wholly failed to take any

action whatsoever to protect its employees and that such failure constituted negligence and gross negligence."

The plaintiffs contend the defendant breached its obligation to Stiles to provide him with a reasonably safe place to work.

Mrs. Stiles' husband would still be alive, she contends, but for the exposure to vinyl chloride, its fumes and vapors, which caused the brain tumor which was the proximate cause of Stiles' death.

\$1 million lawsuit is alleging death due to vinyl chloride

Chronicle Galveston Bureau

GALVESTON — A Pasadena woman filed a \$1 million damage lawsuit against the Union Carbide Corp. in connection with the death of her husband from a brain tumor.

The lawsuit is believed to be the first filed after a federal investigation linked brain tumors with vinyl chloride fumes.

The investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, made public last month, linked 10 deaths of workers at the Carbide plant in Texas City to vinyl chloride. A later investigation linked several deaths of workers at the nearby Monsanto Co. plant to the plastic product.

Scientists believe that inhalation of vinyl chloride fumes can cause a tumor called glioblastoma multiforme and cause death.

Scientists are sifting medical and death records of thousands of current and former employees of the plants to determine how widespread the condition might be among workers.

The lawsuit was filed Thursday in state district court here by Doris Stiles, widow of James Harvey Stiles Jr., for herself

and her children, James Harvey Stiles III, Sharon Stiles Baker and Carl Stiles.

The lawsuit says Stiles worked at Union Carbide from 1946 until his death from a brain tumor July 19, 1974, 15 days after his 51st birthday.

It alleges that the death was caused by exposure "to caustic chemicals including but not limited to vinyl chloride," which induced a brain tumor.

The lawsuit charges that the company knew or should have known of the dangers of vinyl chloride and that "defendant purposely withheld such knowledge from its employees and wholly failed to take any action whatsoever to protect its employees."

It charges gross negligence under the state's wrongful death statutes.

The Daily Sun, Friday, March 9, 1979,

Carbide reserves comment

TEXAS CITY — Union Carbide officials say they are not prepared to comment on the \$1 million suit filed against the company by the family of an employee who died after developing a brain tumor.

Ron Ritchie, employee relations manager for Union Carbide's Texas City plant said, "Carbide has not received a copy of the suit filed in the 56th District Court. The first we knew of it was what we read in the newspaper. Until we receive a copy, we can't make a statement."

Thursday the family of the late James Harvey Stiles Jr. filed a \$1 million lawsuit against Union Carbide Corp. which alleges chemicals used at the corporation's plant in Texas City caused a brain tumor which

led to Stiles' death.

The dead man's wife and three children contend in the suit that Union Carbide is guilty of "gross negligence" for not informing Stiles about the danger of vinyl chloride and other hazardous chemicals handled at the plant.

The suit states, "the defendant purposely withheld such knowledge from its employees and wholly failed to take any action whatsoever to protect its employees and that such failure constituted negligence and gross negligence."

Now under way by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is an investigation into the brain tumor deaths

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Carbide

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of Union Carbide employees.

NIOSH reports there is a possible link between the chemical vinyl chloride and

brain tumors, or cancer. The chemical-cancer probe, said federal officials, will not be complete for several months.

'Chain reaction' implicates Monsanto

By CATHY GILLENLINE
Daily Sun Reporter

TEXAS CITY—A chain reaction of friend remembering friend has extended the investigation of brain cancer deaths across the city from Carbide to Monsanto.

"It began with an employee complaint, and most of the information we have been getting has come from people remembering other people who worked at a plant and died in the same way," said OSHA spokesman Davis Layne. "We are continuing to get complaints and are planning a full epidemiological investigation at

Union Carbide in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is our sister agency," Layne added.

City Secretary Bobby Earle has reported that OSHA representatives have come to city hall on several occasions recently to obtain death certificates for employees of both Union Carbide and Monsanto.

In addition to word of mouth reports, OSHA has been relying heavily on help from union representatives in gathering information, according to Layne. "And the publicity given the investigation has added information as more and more people hear about it and call us," Layne added.

"All our investigations are very preliminary at this point," Layne reported. "Staffs to handle local investigations are still being organized. We have only seven Industrial Hygienists in the Houston office and many of them must cover other worker complaints."

Personnel at both Union Carbide and Monsanto are aiding in the investigation which involves, to date, ten deaths at Union Carbide and five at Monsanto.

A Monsanto spokesman emphasized that the glioblastoma multiform type of cancer identified as the cause of death in six of ten

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Monsanto

(Continued from Page 1)

Carbide victims had not been established as a cause of death in the five cases unearthed from some 1,300 death certificates checked by Monsanto.

The Monsanto investigation was begun by the company following the reports of an investigation at Union Carbide.

The entire investigation began with a Carbide worker complaint on November 27 made to OSHA. OSHA workers then unearthed ten deaths from brain cancer between 1962 and 1978. An eleventh victim of the tumor, also a Carbide worker, is still living.

Vinyl chloride, suspected as the cause of several types of cancer, is still manufactured at Union Carbide. The substance, used in the manufacture of a

variety of plastic materials, has not been produced at Monsanto since 1968. Monsanto purchased the plant from the federal government in the mid 1940's and produced vinyl chloride there from 1953 to 1968.

Investigations at the two local plants could last from six months to a year, according to OSHA, and investigations are complicated by the long time span which can elapse between exposure and illness.

Vinyl chloride as a possible cancer-producing agent has been under study in the United States and abroad for a number of years. Current data confirms that cancer can result from contact with the substance.