FILE NAME: Weyerhaeuser (WEY)

DATE: 1975 Apr 23

DOC#: WEY006

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Memo

Johns-Manville

Internal Correspondence

CONFIDENTIAL

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Subject: ASBESTOS DUST SURVEY
GSA BATON ROUGE WAREHOUSE

Authur Neilson of the Tulane University School of Medicine telephoned me to advise that he had personally sampled the GSA Baton Rouge Warehouse once in late March, and a second time on April 4, 1975. The survey was made at the request of, and paid for by, GSA.

The results of this survey have just been determined. No formal report has as yet been submitted. For this reason, this information should be treated confidentially.

It is Mr. Neilson's understanding that the survey came about as a result of a new GSA Safety Man's concern for the dusty situation he observed.

Mr. Neilson's survey results confirm that conditions are extremely bad. The survey was made to cover working conditions involved in re-bagging amosite fiber for shipment to Johns-Manville. The work was being done by employees of the company with whom Johns-Manville has a contract for re-packaging this fiber.

According to Mr. Neilson, the general background level within the warehouse was approximately 25 F/cc. Airborne concentration ranges for some typical jobs are as follows:

Re-packaging Operator	98-128 F/cc
Truck Lift Operator	204 F/cc
Floor Baggers	139-198 F/cc
Top Baggers	66-82 F/cc
Sacking & Banding Operators (Out-of-Doors)	4.2-7.4 F/cc

The re-bagging method used when Mr. Neilson first started his survey consisted of having Top Baggers physically on top of an approximately 20 foot high pile of bagged amosite. These men placed the jute bag within a plastic bag, and without sealing the plastic bag, dropped it to the floor below. The Floor Baggers would then close the plastic bag using wire ties. The duties of the Re-packaging Operator were essentially the same as those described for Floor Bagger.

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Respirators were in use during this operation. They were not, however, suitable for the high fiber concentrations noted above. They were the usual industrial, reusable, air purifying respirator, which is authorized for use up to not more than 10 times TLV, or 50 F/cc. Additional protective equipment consisted of coveralls. There was no head or foot gear in use. The respirators were used only while actually working, which Mr. Neilson estimated at approximately 40% of the total time the employees were in the warehouse.

According to Mr. Neilson, a "high level" meeting was to have been held last Friday among appropriate GSA officials, for the purpose of determining what should be done in view of the overall situation. He stated that his contact, the Supervisor of the GSA warehouses in the southern part of the United States, mentioned the possibility that the contract might have to be abrogated for lack of suitable solutions to the dust problem.

Mr. Neilson does not consider the problem insurmountable. He immediately eliminated the dropping of bags from the top of the asbestos piles to the floor. The alternative used is to lower them using a high masted fork truck. He also instituted tying the plastic bags at the top of the pile before they are lowered to the floor. He suggested that a program to handle these shipments safely would consist of:

1. Chutes for getting the bagged asbestos to floor level.
2. Use of air supplied respirators.
3. Stringent rules regarding work practices.
4. An evaluation and suitable corrective measures for the present inadequate warehouse ventilation.
5. Better housekeeping practices.
6. Strict and specific agreements for proper work practices to be made among Johns-Manville, GSA, and the contractor.

Mr. Neilson noted that the plastic bags used have one-inch holes perforated in them on approximately 12-inch centers. He assumes these were provided to make the bagging operation easier, however they obviously make the plastic bag less effective in correcting the dust problem.

His final incidental observation was that the Weyerhauser Corporation is also buying this fiber. However, they are accepting it "as is". No attempt is being made to re-bag it or in any other way prevent the escape of asbestos.

I have already discussed this situation with Jack Mitchell and Emil Thies of the Pipe Division, Kerm Beyard of IPD, and Pete Geleta of the Purchasing Department. Because much of this information is new since I talked to them, I am forwarding them a copy for their information.

E. L. Swallow
ELS/lhe

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