

Disease Found in 25% of Small-Business Workers

WASHINGTON, April 27 (AP)—A study done for the Government has found that one out of every four workers in a sample of small businesses employing from eight to 150 people has an occupationally derived disease and that 39 percent of those are not reported as required to the Labor Department.

The study was done in the state of Washington and Oregon by the University of Washington for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. It is to be published in about six weeks.

Some of the diseases listed

in the study included chronic health and safety subcommittee respiratory disease due to lead, asbestos and other fibrous-like dust in work areas; loss of hearing due to noise; eye catarracts from infrared radiation; and increased lead absorption in the blood.

On lead absorption, the report says, "If exposures continue, serious illness may result and the long range implications of high levels of lead stored in the blood is unknown." The extent of such conditions among the employed population are no where available," the report says.

The chairman of the House subcommittee on Small Business, V. Daniel, Democrat of New Jersey, said that the results of the study were "shocking, revealing a possible horror story of national proportions."

"If we had statistics from an in-depth medical survey of the nation's workers, they would paint a picture of diseases and chronic illness as horrible as conditions in the sweatshops of the last century," he said.

The study was conducted between 1972 and 1974 in three industrial areas of Tacoma and Seattle, Wash., and Portland, Ore., and an agricultural area of Yakima County, Wash.