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To Safety Directors

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Violations.

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OSHA has targeted about 100 superfund waste sites for inspection each year as part of a special emphasis enforcement program for hazardous waste sites, and will conduct "at least as many" inspections to determine compliance with the interim standard's provisions, according to Frank White, OSHA deputy administrator.

Enforcement

WILLFUL RECORDKEEPING CITATIONS FROM OSHA CHARGE MONSANTO, USX WITH NUMEROUS VIOLATIONS

Two more major companies — Monsanto Corp. and USX Corp. — are being charged with failing to record injuries or medical treatment involving workers, according to citations issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The agency cited Monsanto for 11 instances of alleged violations at its Nitro, W.Va., plant, and proposed a \$55,000 penalty. The agency also charged USX, formerly United States Steel Corp., with willfully violating recordkeeping requirements in 98 instances at its Clairton, Pa., coke works and sought a fine of \$130,000.

The alleged infractions by Monsanto showed an "ongoing pattern of indifference to accurately recording certain types of on-the-job injuries and illnesses." The company failed to record, or improperly recorded, various types of injuries that required medical treatment, restricted work activity, lost workdays, or "in some cases" workers' compensation claims, OSHA charged.

According to the citations against USX, the steel company intentionally failed to record lost-workday or restricted-activity cases in 60 instances, and failed to record or properly record medical treatment cases in 38 instances.

'Difference of Opinion'

Monsanto communications specialist Scarlett Foster said the company is contesting the citations against the Nitro facility. The company is "surprised and concerned that OSHA has taken this course of action over a difference of opinion" on injury and illness recordability, she said.

Monsanto is reviewing the alleged violations and plans to meet with the agency within 15 days, after which time it will decide whether to pursue its contest of the citations, Foster told BNA.

USX had no comment on the Clairton citations. Ernie Glenn, communications manager for USX, said company officials are still reviewing the allegations.

OSHA said it found the alleged violations at the Monsanto plant during an inspection prompted by an employee complaint. The inspection at USX was conducted as part of the agency's special emphasis enforcement program in the chemical industry.

The citations are the latest in a series of actions by OSHA charging large companies with willful recordkeeping violations (Current Report, Nov. 12, p. 614). The agency began this year to emphasize the importance of keeping accurate injury and illness records, in response to concerns about its policy of exempting some workplaces from comprehensive inspections based on the results of inspections of the firm's records.

Formaldehyde

LIMITED REOPENING OF RULEMAKING RECORD ANNOUNCED TO CONSIDER NEW EXPOSURE DATA

A limited reopening of the rulemaking record on formal-

dehyde was announced Dec. 12 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to allow the consideration of new information on exposures to the chemical (51 FR 44796).

The information received by the agency since the record closed in August is relevant to issues addressed at length during public hearings on the proposed rule, including epidemiologic studies of persons exposed to formaldehyde, additional data on worker exposures in foundries, and feasibility, OSHA said (Current Report, May 8, p. 1227; May 15, p. 1244; May 22, p. 1278).

Requesting that comments on the new information be submitted by Jan. 12, 1987, OSHA emphasized that the action "in no way alters the stated target date for issuance of a final standard of September 1987."

The agency proposed in December 1985 to reduce exposures to the chemical by lowering the permissible exposure limit, if formaldehyde is determined to be an irritant, or, alternatively, lowering the PEL as part of a comprehensive standard, if the chemical is determined to be a carcinogen (Current Report, Dec. 5, 1985, p. 555; text, Dec. 12, 1985, p. 605).

Additional Information Received

In announcing the action, OSHA stated that the new data "may be useful for a full consideration of these issues." It is in the public interest to consider the information and allow an opportunity for public comment, the agency maintained.

Among information received by the agency was a re-analysis, dated Nov. 24, 1986, of a National Cancer Institute study that reported "little evidence" that exposure to formaldehyde in the workplace is associated with human cancer deaths (Current Report, March 6, p. 1004).

The re-analysis, however, found a significantly elevated relative risk of death from all cancers as well as lung cancer for hourly workers when compared with rates for salaried workers. The NCI study had drawn criticism from labor unions that participation in the study by the Formaldehyde Institute, an association representing users and manufacturers of formaldehyde and formaldehyde products, had compromised its results.

New information received by the agency also included a re-analysis of the NCI data by its authors to discover the cause of excess mortality from cancers of the nasopharynx and oropharynx, detected in the original study. Upon review, the authors noted a trend that suggested that simultaneous exposure to formaldehyde and particulate dusts may be associated with nasopharyngeal cancer.

Following the September release of a study contracted for by the Environmental Protection Agency, OSHA indicated that it was considering a limited reopening of the record (Current Report, Sept. 17, p. 403). Directed by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, an independent research institute, the study found no association between upper respiratory cancers and occupational exposure to formaldehyde.

Written comments should be submitted in quadruplicate on or before Jan. 12, 1987, to the OSHA Docket Office, Docket No. 225B, Room N-3670, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

For further information, contact James Foster, OSHA Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C.; (202) 523-8151.