

Two of the 11 lung cancer cases and one of the lymphoblastoma cases had worked in the asbestos plant for a total of only six months which is a rather short exposure, and one wonders how much this short exposure may have contributed. Eighteen of these 21 cases had started work in the plant prior to 1940 and 12 had started work prior to 1920.

Of the 21 cases of cancer 11 were born before 1900 and only one was born after 1910.

Microwave Ovens -

Personnel of our Region III (Meadville) have recently completed a study of the hazards associated with exposures to microwave radiation in connection with operation of microwave ovens. These ovens are popular in food-service establishments in general and are gaining popularity for self-service facilities in factory and college cafeterias, in super-highway rest stations, and in recreational centers such as bowling lanes.

The principal hazard of exposure to microwave radiation is the biological effect resulting from the heating of body tissues. This study was concerned with the monitoring of microwave radiation leakage from oven units now installed in the Region III area and in evaluating the hazards or potential hazards which were present.

No detectable radiation was found at any location on the units except around the periphery of the door and in the area of the door front. Measurements made at varying distances from the ovens indicated diminishing levels with no detectable radiation intensities at a distance greater than about one meter from the oven. However, the radiation released from 79% of the units was somewhat in excess of that considered safe for indefinitely prolonged exposure and 25% released radiation in excess of the criteria considered potentially hazardous. Although the intensities found are not related to exposure time, the findings of the study indicate that a potential hazard does exist and measures to minimize it should be considered. These would include:

1. The construction of ovens should utilize features which prevent the release of microwave radiation.
2. Interlock systems (to permit oven operation only when door is closed) should be designed to prevent circumvention of their use.
3. Units should be adequately labeled to alert owners and operators of the potential hazard of operating units in manner other than prescribed procedure.
4. Owners, operators and service personnel should be made aware of the hazard of exposure to microwave radiation.
5. Units should be monitored periodically to detect leakage or faulty operational devices.

Occupational Health Bills in Legislative Hopper -

The Pennsylvania Legislature is currently considering several items of proposed legislation dealing with occupational health matters. A Senate bill on radiation would create an Advisory Committee on Atomic Energy Development and Radiation Control; empower the Governor to enter into agreements with the federal government for assumption of certain regulatory powers; and would confer certain