

Polison Gas Damage from Motor Vehicles:

Hygienic Laboratory
RED-KAN

April 23, 1924.

The attached file consisting of various letters by W.F. Deppe of the Deppe Motors Corporation, 151 Church Street, New York City, is respectfully returned to the Surgeon General, for the attention of Assistant Surgeon General A.M. Stimson, with the following comment:

From the theoretical standpoint it would seem that a serious health hazard might result from the use of lead tetraethyl in internal combustion engines in such places as vehicular tunnels, garages, and possibly on crowded thoroughfares. However, at the present time there is no information at hand to show that such an hazard exists, one man (see attached correspondence) going so far as to state that the lead is deposited on the interior walls of the combustion chambers and not discharged through the exhaust. If this be true the health hazard to the general public could be disregarded.

A previous memorandum submitted by the Hygienic Laboratory on November 23, 1922, pointed out that the use of the compound under ordinary conditions would be the ultimate test of the hazard to human beings. The possibility is suggested of obtaining reports from the manufacturers of the lead tetraethyl compound in regard to any effects noted in those who have been exposed to the gas during experimental trials.

Lacking such information a danger must necessarily be placed on such experimental data as is being collected by the Bureau of Mines. From recent communications with that Bureau it is understood that their experiments to date are negative, but that a longer period of time is necessary before a definite conclusion can be given out,

In view of the progress of the experiments of the Bureau of Mines and the lack of information concerning deleterious results following exposure of human beings it would seem advisable to withhold opinion, for the time being, as to the health hazard.

W. H. Sawyer,
Acting Director.