

National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association

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October 20, 1954

TO CLASS A AND B MEMBERS:

Proposed Precautionary Labeling and Health-Education Program

Our industry has always been in the forefront and has been a leader in the field of safeguarding the public. In 1939, members of this Association adopted a policy to protect the health of children and all others who might come in contact with their products. Our members were the first to sell toy manufacturers the idea that they should purchase only finishes which are harmless when chewed and eaten by children. Apart from the legislative phase, the Association has initiated a Health-Education Program. Under it we will issue releases to the newspapers, radio and television directed to educating parents in the importance of watching what young children put in their mouths, chew and eat. Also, we will emphasize to local medical and public health authorities the need of care in diagnosing these cases.

Recent adverse publicity on alleged lead poisoning of children attributed to paint again presents a challenge to our industry. This situation has been brought even more forcibly to our attention as a result of the activities of the New York City and Chicago Health Departments. Legislative proposals recommended "POISON" or "UNSAFE" labels on paints containing lead.

At the same time, it was evident that various states, such as New York, New Jersey and others would join Illinois and California in the adoption of rules and regulations relating to the labeling of harmful substances. A progressive program by our industry has been inaugurated to maintain uniformity of regulations so one label could be used nationally.

I appointed a Subcommittee on Model Labeling. This subcommittee working with the Chicago and New York health authorities has prepared the attached precautionary labels. They have been approved and recommended by our Executive Committee for presentation to the New York City and Chicago public health authorities. This has been done and both the Association and the industry have been commended.

At this time the New York City Department of Health has under consideration a regulation requiring warning labels on paint products containing more than 1 percent of lead as metal (Pb) in a compound or containing a compound of antimony, arsenic, cadmium, selenium, mercury or barium. The regulation will apply to ALL PAINTS AND ENAMELS sold to toy manufacturers and to the general public. We are advised the regulation will exempt industrial maintenance paints, automotive refinishes, roof coatings, roof cements, marine paints, and all industrial product finishes except toy enamels. The Association will have an opportunity to study the draft of the proposed regulation and to suggest changes, if necessary, before it is submitted to the New York City Board of Health on October 29.

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All groups with whom we have talked are in agreement that a nationwide Health-Education Program will accomplish more than any stringent labeling law or restriction of the use of paint raw materials.

I will keep you informed of any further developments.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph F. Battley
President

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enclosure

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