

more hazardous than in the wheat fields of the Dakotas.

Gold: How dangerous is it to be exposed to isocyanate fumes, every work day?

Willens: Isocyanate vapors, which come off a liquid, are very hazardous. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists have established a Threshold Limit Value of 200 parts per million, for any length of time. In other words, a person should never be subjected to these vapors, at concentrations above this limit, at anytime during the work day. It can seriously affect the upper respiratory tract.

Delegate: Polyurethane paint has a TDI or toluene isocyanate in it. We now have about 40 people on record with a respiratory ailment. All of these people are working in the area where this paint is being applied.

I called in the state and Federal government inspectors to run tests in the area, and they stated that their readings showed that there is a .01 parts per million of these vapors in the air. However, the people are still getting sick. The manufacturer said there is no toluene isocyanate in this paint. What can be done to stop the paint manufacturers from making these claims when they are not true? The painters using this paint wear respirators; however, they are still suffering the same ill effects. There are also people working in the area who are not equipped with respirators, and they are suffering the same ill effects.

Willens: I do not know the governing laws in your state; however, in Illinois Part J in the Labeling Code makes it mandatory for the manufacturer of the chemical to state, on a label, the various toxic materials contained in the substance. As a matter of fact, the company that buys the materials is responsible for seeing that the labels are on the containers. The Illinois State Labor Department is responsible for enforcing this labeling code. If people are still getting sick from breathing the air in the work area, there must be something wrong. It may be that when the inspectors took readings, the air was not as contaminated as it may have been during different times of the day, or different days of the week.

Delegate: When we asked the Federal Industrial Hygienist to come and check the work area, he came with the state inspector and met and talked only with management

people. They did not discuss the problem with the union safety personnel.

Willens: It is true that all industrial hygienists, regardless of whether they are state government or Federal government, first contact management and are usually escorted by management, primarily because management owns the property and is the legal host. However, I believe that the industrial hygienist should discuss the situation with the union safety people, especially if the union is the one that made the initial request for the inspection.

Delegate: Why is it that the system of recording accident rates and calculating frequency and severity rates are so confusing and lend themselves to covering up serious accidents?

Lennie: I have to agree that frequency rates are very confusing. We have an organized plant across the street from our plant in Hamilton, Canada, and our safety engineer tells us that their frequency rate is much better than ours. I questioned some of the employees in the plant across the street and found that one of the reasons they have such a good rate is because they have employees coming in to work on crutches, and injured people are kept in change houses. They have a system where they use the designation of PLT which indicates "possible lost time". They also designate some injuries as minor. It is up to the first aid attendant to determine the seriousness of the injury. These are some of the things that make frequency rates confusing and misleading.

Delegate: There is a lot of truth in what Mr. Lennie says, and it is true that accidents are hidden. However, I believe that any safety director that allows this to happen is only kidding himself. He has nothing to base his progress on.

Delegate: To me, it's just a numbers game. The doctor says you either take the soft job or go on pension. Every company operates differently, and every state operates differently. The day we get to the truth, it will be the best thing that ever happened.

Gold: What are some of the ways for convincing a company of the benefits of a labor-management safety committee?

Whitehouse: The answer to that is obvious; however, in some cases it seems to be a real problem. In the IBEW, we have over 1,800 local unions, and out of that there are 1,100 joint labor-management safety com-