

Cambridge



TO: T. E. Winkel/Santa Ana

DATE: 1 February 1985

FROM: T. E. Hamilton

cc: J. W. Wolter
W. R. Wright

SUBJECT: Newspaper Article Entitled, "Routine Chest X-Ray Found to Have Little Medical Value," Jan. 24, 1985

Your question regarding our policy on the frequency of chest x-rays for CPD employees is not new; we have looked into this problem a number of times. The reason for our present policy involves two factors: OSHA requirements and a working population "exposed" to asbestos.

OSHA regulations require an annual chest x-ray on all employees exposed to asbestos. Employees are considered to be exposed to asbestos if they are exposed above 0.1 f/cc. Our air sampling data for 1984 shows that we are below this level in most plants; however, we feel that the 0.1 level is difficult to maintain. For example, exposures above 0.1 can occur when employees are working with baghouse or stoner waste, especially if there is a spill or major adjustment required. Also, fiber counting at the 0.1 level is not highly accurate. The amount of error is such that we are not 95% confident that we are below the 0.1 level.

The other reason for our present policy is that our workers differ considerably from the group of people described in the article. The article discusses the routine x-rays of randomly selected hospital patients whereas our employees represent a unique population in which all have similar workplace exposures.

Until we are confident that we are below the action level for medical testing, we are obligated by OSHA regulations to offer annual chest x-rays to our employees.

Thomas E. Hamilton

TEH/cs

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