

July 22, 1949

TO: Regional Managers

Subject: Lead Warning Signs.

*File in
Carter's Room
US Public Health
and Safety
off*

The subject of lead warning plates currently required by the U. S. Public Health Service is a topic which periodically comes up for discussion. One of the obvious reasons is that the program at present requires the outlay of approximately \$20,000 a year on the part of Ethyl Corporation and about one and one-half times that by our customers. In addition to these costs are not inconsiderable amounts for freight and handling charges and for accounting. In May of this year, Oscar Lewis raised the question as to whether or not these signs had outlived their usefulness, and it was agreed that a study should be made to find an answer.

A preliminary and exploratory survey was conducted by Russ Weston's department, which indicates that perhaps the general public was inclined to look upon these warning plates as a sign of quality which, if true, would tend to detract from the value of our Trade-Mark to some extent. There is no question but what the installation and renewal of these plates is an expense and probably a good deal of a nuisance to many of our customers.

It can be said quite frankly that there appears to be a rather wide difference of opinion regarding the advisability of approaching the Public Health Service to see whether or not they would be willing to alter their rules so as no longer to require this label. I feel that one of the most important things to find out in this connection is the opinion of our Regional Managers who are continually in contact with customers, account men, and so forth. It is also hoped that without in any way committing the company to a definite plan of action you can find out from a representative group of your customers whether or not the lead warning plates have any real value to them, or whether there is any feeling about using them one way or the other. I can assure you that we will take no action until we have this information, and that even then we will go slowly and cautiously.

If the Corporation should decide to make an effort to eliminate this requirement, we would have committed ourselves to a course from which we could not very well withdraw.

We do not believe that it will take a great deal of time for you to formulate an opinion and to obtain the feelings of a few of our typical customers. In addition, it is quite important that any moves toward major policy changes be made as far in advance of contract signing time as possible and, therefore, we would much appreciate having your opinions soon. If it would not be pushing too hard, perhaps you could get them to us before August 15th.

EOJ/AL

cc: Mr. O. B. Lewis
Mr. M. P. Murdock
Mr. R. B. Weston

E. O. Jones

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Mr. R. B. Weston

7/26 - Mr. J. J. Frey

7/29 - Dr. R. A. Kehoe

KE 0009453