Georgia-Pacific

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

DATE: August 14, 1973

TO: Mr. C. W. Lehnert LOCATION: Tigard

FROM: E. D. O'Neill LOCATION: Tigard

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

GP-1647

SUBJECT: GYPSUM ASSOCIATION SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON JOINT COMPOUND HAZARDS FIRST MEETING HELD IN CHICAGO ON AUGUST 8, 1973

Summary and Comments

Initial laboratory tests by USG and National indicate that nuisance dust and asbestos levels are above the limit as set by OSHA during the mixing operation of bagged joint compounds on the job. The dust and asbestos created by the sanding operation was thought to be below the required limits.

Because of the fact that these products contain asbestos, all should be labeled with the standard asbestos caution label. This includes ready mix. In addition special caution instructions should be included to warn of the dust hazard. These instructions are being reviewed by the Gypsum Association attorney.

On the basis of the above findings, it was agreed to monitor the dust, asbestos, and quartz content of actual job conditions to ascertain the extent of the problem.

In talking to the members of the committee, it was gathered that USG and National have placed emphasis at their plants on monitoring and control of dust and asbestos rather than an elimination of asbestos in formulations. It was their feeling that after asbestos, silica would be the target of OSHA and that it was a possibility that eventually all bagged joint compounds would be eliminated from the market. As the law stands all construction jobs are in violation of law because they do not monitor the dust content or keep records.

It is the writer's opinion we should be carrying out our own monitoring program, that we should set up procedures for record keeping at all plants, that each plant should be regularly inspected with particular emphasis on enforcing a strict housekeeping program. It appears that we may not be taking a sufficiently serious view of this whole problem and may be exposing the company to heavy fines from OSHA.

Attached is the agenda.

The following are the comments and results of the meeting:

1&2. Introduction and Evaluation and Events to Date

Both USG and National Gypsum have run preliminary lab surveys on the potential dangers to applicators

on the use of joint compounds. Their findings indicate that (a) applicators are probably exposed to excess dust and asbestos as defined by the law in the mixing operation of bagged joint compounds, (b) applicators may not be exposed to excess dust or asbestos during the sanding operation.

It was pointed out, however, that the applicator or drywall contractor is responsible to cause every place of employment where asbestos fibers are released to be monitored in such a way as to determine whether every employee's exposure to asbestos fibers is below the limits as prescribed by OSHA.

It was felt that if the committee could supply results of actual typical field conditions to OSHA a variance could be obtained from the above section of the regulations.

It was also agreed that immediate action be taken to label ready mix and bags to protect the manufacturer from liability due to asbestos and dust; i.e., ready mix would be labeled with the caution asbestos label as recommended by OSHA and all products would have the following instructions - "When mixing and/or dry sanding, wear eye protection and respirator. Wet sanding or sponging is recommended where practical."

The final wording will be decided by the Gypsum Association attorney and the individual manufacturer's lawyers.

3&4. The scope of the special committee was defined as follows:

The scope of the special committee shall be to establish recommended practices for handling gypsum wallboard joint treatment compound in order to comply with current and anticipated environmental health standards.

5. Mr. Joe Volk from National Gypsum was elected as chairman and Mr. Herb Carlsen as secretary.

6. A discussion took place as to the requirements for a field test program to evaluate the actual hazards involved. It was agreed to test ready mix and topping compound in Denver. Members would be requested to submit samples for a test program. Confidentiality would be preserved and an individual's products would not be identified.

7. Three independent test labs were suggested as possible alternatives to carry out the field tests and these are to be interviewed by the committee.

8. It was decided to try to run these tests not later than September 15, 1973, so that a preliminary report would be available for the Board of Directors meeting.

9. The next meeting takes place in Denver to coincide with the field tests. It is the writer's responsibility to ensure proper application methods are carried out by the applicator during these tests. The meeting was adjourned.

E. D. O.

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