UC 149-2

UNION CARBIDE

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

MINING AND METALS DIVISION • P. O. BOX 579, NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK 14302

To (Name) Mr. R.F.X. Fusaro
Division Law Department
Location New York, New York

Date April 6, 1973
Originating Dept. "Calidria" Asbestos - Marketing
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Answering letter date

Copy to

Subject

Enclosed is a copy of my oral presentation to the SPE-RETEC, with copies of the transparencies shown.

Please review the content for possible presentation to other groups.

John L. Myers

/ds
Enclosure

03075

PLASTICS TECHNOLOGY
MARCH 1973

EDITORIAL

The Familiar Aroma of Panic

Sensationalism in the general press can have two effects: (1) stir industry and governmental groups to corrective action and (2) cause overreaction and panic in the public's mind. We saw it in the press treatment of the "plastic pollution" problem; we're seeing it now in the asbestos situation.

Fact: Overwhelming statistical data indicate that inhalation of excessive amounts of free fibers or dust of crocidolite and amosite asbestos can cause disabling lung damage and possibly death. Result: OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has designated asbestos as a "target health hazard"; EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) has designated it a "hazardous air pollutant." And OSHA standards for exposure to permissible concentrations of asbestos dust (5 fibers/cu cm for an 8-hr time-weighted average) have been established; they will be further tightened in July '76 (to 2 fibers/cu cm).

The general press has had a field day. Talk about irresponsible reporting! After reading one of the articles I even got to wondering about the asbestos in the taping compound in my dry-wall-construction home. Also, in the general press, the "hazards" faced by mechanics blowing out asbestos-containing brake-lining dust from old brake assemblies are highlighted regardless of published studies by the U.S. Public Health Service showing that less than 1% of the 50% of asbestos in brake linings remains a free fiber in the dust after wear, or another study that established that men working in the blow-out procedure had a time-weighted-exposure of 0.68 fibers/cu cm (compared with the five-fiber OSHA standard).

The fact that the direst predictions of fatalities are based on data from fatalities and illnesses caused by working conditions 20 and 40 years ago, and in industries where free asbestos was blown, does not hinder the imagination of the reporters. (Remember those newspaper stories about that hazardous *new* plastic—PVC—that was saturating the environment with phosgene and hydrochloric acid?) Unfortunately, the aroma of panic is familiar.

So, what's the answer?

In plastics, of course, asbestos is of primary concern to those using reinforced phenolic molding compounds, vinyl tiles, some reinforced polyesters and other materials. And the question for these people is, how much of a problem (or hazard) does use of asbestos entail? Frankly, as yet, no one knows. To my knowledge, no data exist on concentration of loose fibers in the atmosphere when one is running asbestos-filled phenolics; we must find out. Also, apparently no data now exist on potential dangers of chrysotile asbestos (the most commonly used as a reinforcement). OSHA recognizes this in their standard when they state: "Reasons of practical administration preclude a variety of standards for different kinds of asbestos and of workplaces. Also, while the evidence tends to show that crocidolite, for instance, is more harmful than chrysotile, the evidence is not sufficient to establish separate standards for varieties of asbestos." Also, they recognize the differences in medical opinions when they state: "Most medical opinion is divided between a two-fiber standard and a five-fiber standard." (Both quotes from *Federal Register, Vol. 37, No. 110—Wed., June 7, 1972.*)

The nut of it is that there is still a great deal yet to be found out. Hysterical publicity never solved a problem. The answer lies in cold objectivity in gathering and analyzing sufficient data to control the problem. There is no question that asbestos can constitute a health hazard (so can handling sulfuric acid). Don't let's throw the baby out with the bath water.

03076

Malcolm W. Riley

EDITOR

Wider Link to Cancer Found in Asbestos Workers

Asbestos Cause Cancer
Asbestos Caused Cancer
Of New

ASBESTOS: AIRBORNE DANGER

Perilous Particles: Tiny Fibers
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Congressman
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Asbestos in consumer products
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Navy Probe Asked
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Shipyard Workers of 1940's Told of Cancer Peril

Inhaling Cancer
Asbestos Under Fire

03077

UCC 014303

Say Asbestos a 'Time Bomb' That Will Kill 1 Mil. in U.S.

By JOHN STOWELL

WASHINGTON (AP) — Calling asbestos a "hidden time bomb," a noted researcher told a Senate subcommittee the fibrous mineral will claim one million American lives by the year 2000.

Dr. Irving Selikoff of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York said the victims will be persons who are or have been working regularly with asbestos.

"All will die within the next 30 to 35 years," he told the Senate commerce environmental subcommittee.

"It's terrible enough for these one million people," Selikoff said, "but they're a limited group."

Millions of other persons are exposed to asbestos fibers to an unknown degree every day of their lives, without their knowledge, he said.

"We are all now contaminated with asbestos," he said.

The subcommittee was told that more than 3,000 consumer products and a host of building materials contain asbestos, which accumulates in the human lung.

Beer, liquor, wine, injectable drugs and even water may be contaminated when filtered through asbestos, Selikoff said.

Other common sources, he said, are in the talc used in polished rice and balloons to keep them from sticking together, and papier mache used in school art classes.

The Food and Drug Administration last year issued regulations banning the use of asbestos in garments, and has proposed a ban on asbestos-laden talc in food and food packaging.

Selikoff and other witnesses expressed support for a toxic substances control bill.

Albert J. Fritsch, a director of the nonprofit Center for Science in the Public Interest, said worldwide annual consumption of asbestos has increased in the last 90 years from about 500 tons to more than 4 million tons.

"It is time to start cleaning up the asbestos mess and prevent further damage to human health," he said.

"We need a bill to cover all phases of asbestos use and we need pretesting, health research labeling and environmental controls," Fritsch testified.

Selikoff's associate, Dr. Arthur M. Langer, said he is studying polar ice cap cores in an attempt to determine whether there are more airborne asbestos fibers now than hundreds of years ago.

"It is our impression that there are," he said, "but that has not been scientifically substantiated."

Recent research has indicated that asbestos-related diseases are not unique to workers who come in frequent contact with the mineral, he said.

Relatives and neighbors may be exposed to airborne fibers carried home on the worker's clothing, he said, and people living in the vicinity of asbestos factories also are exposed.

Selikoff noted that asbestos is a "hidden time bomb," causing cancer that may not be detected for 20, 30 or even 40 years.

"It's what's happening in 1973 that will become evident in the year 2000," he said.

Of the one million workers who already have been exposed he said, 200,000 will die of lung cancer, 70,000 of asbestosis, or lung scarring, and 150,000 of various other cancers. The rest will die of other ailments, he said.

"Unfortunately it's almost entirely a man-made disease," he said. "That means it's also man-preventable."

STARS + STRIPES FEB 26 EDITION

03078

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UCC 014306

UCC 1-69-2

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INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

MINING AND METALS DIVISION • P. O. BOX 579, NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK 14302

To (Name)	Mr. R.F.X. Fusaro	***Date***	April 6, 1973
Division	Law Department		"Calidria" Asbestos - Marketing
Location	New York, New York	***Originating Dept.***	RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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03092

SEP 7 1972

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210

September 1, 1972

Mr. V. J. Meyers, Manager
Environmental Health and Safety
Administration
Western Electric
222 Broadway
New York, New York 10038

Dear Mr. Meyers:

This is in reply to your letter of July 13, 1972 to Mr. Chain Robbins, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Medical examinations are required for all employees engaged in occupations regularly exposed to airborne concentrations of asbestos dust. This would not apply to employees who are engaged in other occupations, even though they may occasionally, and momentarily, enter an area where there are operations involving the use of asbestos.

We do not at this time know specifically which levels of asbestos fibers above zero exposure will not produce mesothelioma, lung cancer and abdominal neoplasms. The medical examinations are appropriate in order to determine most effectively whether the health of employees is adversely affected by this exposure.

This approach may not necessarily be followed for other chemicals or physical agents where dose-response relationships are better defined. Standards may be established where medical examinations may not be required below specified exposure levels exceeding zero exposure.

Sincerely,

GERARD F. SCANNELL
Director
Office of Standards

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