

DATE September 16, 1980

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TO File

The investigation of an allegation of health effects registered by a Paula Case, employee of the Environmental Quality Assurance Unit of Granite City, Illinois, is as follows.

On or about the 14th of July 1980, there was a fire in a capacitor bank at American Steel Industries, Granite City Plant. The fire was fought by the Granite City Fire Department for approximately three (3) hours before being declared out. Somewhere between fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) firemen total were involved. Some for portions of the time, others for the entire three (3) hours. The ambient temperature was 104° that day, in addition to the heat generated by the fire. At the time of the fire, two firemen were hospitalized for respiratory symptoms and several other firemen were given oxygen on the scene because of chest tightness, coughing, and general respiratory symptoms. Since that time, several firemen have continued to complain, particularly in recent weeks, of malaise, headaches, and nausea.

In the investigation of this, Ms. Case alleges that they became aware that the fluid in the transformers may have been PCBs. She states that there was confirmation of the presence of PCB/dielectric fluid, although I have been unable to get this confirmed by the manager of the plant. After discussion with Ms. Case of the symptomatology, I informed her that PCBs, when incinerated produce chlorine compounds, particularly hydrochloric acid and the vapors of such in a fire would certainly lead to acute respiratory symptom but not to prolonged symptoms. She stated that OSHA had inspected the site and had apparently taken samples and declared there was no PCBs present as hazardous to the clean-up crews. She inquired as to the possibility of exposure from exploding transformers and contamination of fire-fighting equipment with liquid. I informed her that this is a viscous oily liquid which we would expect would be quite noticeable if it were present in the liquid stage on any of the equipment. Furthermore, I informed her that the symptoms to be expected from exposure to PCBs that would be observable in seven (7) weeks after exposure would be limited to skin conditions such as chloracne and liver abnormalities. She advised that there were no exams performed and I advised her to have exams performed by competent physicians, including liver function tests in order to document the status of health of the individuals.

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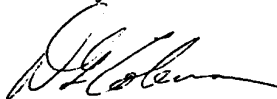
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TO: File

Under a peculiar arrangement in Granite City, the clinic at the Granite City Steel Corporation performs exams for firemen, policemen, and ambulance attendants. I have informed the clinic and the medical director, Dr. John Calvert, of the potential for doing these exams and I will send him reference literature on chloracne and PCB effects on the liver.

Given the litigious nature of the municipal employees in Granite City, I can expect that regardless of the exam findings, legal action may result towards the Monsanto Corporation, either directly or indirectly, through a third-party suit of the industry where the fire occurred.



Donald L. Coleman, M.D.  
Director, Occupational Medicine  
and Epidemiology

ADDENDUM

I was contacted by Dr. Dahlgren on September 16 representing Raltac Scientific Services, who was acting on behalf of Dr. Gantner's office. Dr. Dahlgren stated that he had been contacted by Dr. Gantner and Dr. Copeland, the toxicologist, for Dr. Gantner regarding doing laboratory tests for PCB on the fire-fighter group. Dr. Dahlgren is hesitant to do this because of litigation/compensation questions, but was interested in what to sample, given these circumstances. I informed him that fat biopsies and liver tests were the only areas that can be expected to yield any results for PCBs or their effect. He stated that he will call me if he was going to do any testing.

  
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