



American Telephone and
Telegraph Company
1776 On the Green
Morristown, N. J. 07960

June 9, 1981

To: Medical Directors and Safety Coordinators

The Occupational Health Working Group (OHWG) is pleased to announce that the employee information program on asbestos is now completed and may be ordered by the Bell Operating Companies.

The program consists of a ten minute film/videocassette entitled "Safety Alert: Asbestos" and a brochure that may be handed out to employees. The film provides basic information on asbestos: its uses, where it is found, health hazards, work practices, medical surveillance, monitoring, and personal protective procedures, as well as a dramatization of three work situations where Bell System employees may encounter asbestos (brake and clutch repair, PBX installation and building renovation).

Because of the general nature of most of the information, the film should be suitable for showing to all force groups who may encounter asbestos. Specific work practice information appropriate for the force group could be presented after the film as part of the discussion session.

Samples of the handout brochure are enclosed. Each Bell Operating Company may obtain one camera ready mechanical for local printing of the brochure by contacting Ms. Maxine Condie, at (201) 221-7062.

Videocassettes (any format) and 16mm film prints may be ordered directly from:

MGS Services
619 West 54th Street
New York, NY 10019
Telephone No. (212) 765-4500

Film prints will cost approximately \$65 each, while videocassette prices vary depending on the number ordered (see attached schedule).

We would appreciate your comments on the effectiveness of these materials after your initial "live audience" showings.

R. W. Stone, M.D.
Co-Chairman

J. E. Reese
Co-Chairman

Attachments

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CONTROL OF ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

James M. Degen

What It Is

Asbestos is a generic term for a group of hydrated mineral silicates which can take either an amorphous or crystalline form. The crystalline form, which can be separated into fibers, is the form of asbestos that is responsible for the health concerns associated with exposure to asbestos fibers. The crystalline forms of asbestos can be divided into two general groups: serpentine and amphibole. There is only one type of asbestos in the serpentine group--chrysotile; while the amphibole group includes amosite, crocidolite, anthophyllite, tremolite and actinolite. Ninety-five percent of all asbestos used in the United States has been chrysotile while only five percent has been of the amphibole form.

Health Hazards

Asbestos has received so much attention from the news media in recent years that virtually everyone knows it can be injurious to health. Unfortunately, most people do not understand the mechanism by which asbestos becomes a hazard to health. The mere presence of asbestos, either in a relatively pure state or bound into a product such as floor tile, does not create a health problem. Asbestos becomes a problem when small fibers become airborne where they may be inhaled and deposited in the respiratory tract. Once in the lungs, many of the fibers are not exhaled, but instead may embed themselves in the chest wall and the lungs.

The first disease associated with asbestos was appropriately named asbestosis. Asbestosis is characterized by scarring of the lung tissue and a gradual thickening of the lung wall. Asbestosis is a progressive debilitating disease which eventually causes reduced breathing capacity and, in the more advanced cases, disability and death. There is no known cure for asbestosis, nor is it possible to arrest the progress of the disease. The severity of asbestosis is proportional to both exposure concentration and the total length of time that the exposure continued.

In more recent years asbestos has been identified with one of the more rare forms of cancer, mesothelioma and also with lung cancer. While many of the researchers do not agree on the exact incidence of cancer that can be attributed to asbestos fibers nor on the exposure levels necessary to cause cancer, the general consensus is that asbestos can cause cancer at exposure levels far below that required to cause asbestosis. In the case of lung cancer, a strong synergistic effect between asbestos exposure and cigarette smoking has been identified.

Sources of Asbestos

Asbestos has been widely used in the United States both as an insulation material and as an ingredient in composite materials such as cement, plaster, shingles, tiles, etc. As previously mentioned, the asbestos does not present a problem unless it is disturbed in some manner that can cause small fibers to become airborne.

Specific sources of exposure to Bell System employees that have been identified include boiler and pipe coverings, coverings on emergency generator exhaust systems, transite ducts and floor opening covers, sprayed-on insulation on structural steel, motor vehicle brake and clutch materials, asbestos gloves and heat shield blankets. While the use of asbestos for general insulation purposes has been drastically reduced since the early 1970s, the potential for encountering the material will remain high for years to come.

Actions Taken

Many actions have been taken over the years to both eliminate the use of asbestos containing products where possible and to control the potential for exposure where the asbestos cannot be readily removed or replaced. The first such action was taken in 1974 with the prohibition of any further cutting of transite cable slot covers in central offices. As covers need reconfiguration for additional cables, they are to be replaced with a new steel cover.

Additional actions have been taken as other sources of potential exposure have been identified. These include work practices and special equipment for brake and clutch work, replacement of asbestos gloves with a different material, substitution of a fiberglass heat shield pad for the original asbestos pad and a survey of owned and leased buildings to identify asbestos insulation.

A comprehensive set of overall guidelines for the control of asbestos exposure was issued by AT&T on November 20, 1980 (SR 80-11-100). Included as appendices to the guidelines were copies of pertinent OSHA Standards and Directives and all of the earlier System Letters dealing with specific aspects of asbestos. The final action taken by AT&T was the production of a video tape on asbestos in 1981 (SAFETY ALERT: ASBESTOS).

Unresolved Issues

While the Asbestos Guidelines provide a comprehensive treatment of the subject matter, there are still some gaps in the overall program. To date, solutions to problems have been piece-part, one-at-a-time actions. What is lacking is definitive coordination of an overall policy and program to provide specific instructions for the multitude of occasions where Bell System employees may encounter asbestos while working on a customer's premise. Several BOCs have struggled with this issue in an attempt to

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develop an interdepartmental program that will include employee training, specific responsibilities and specific work procedures. Increasing pressure from labor unions, activist groups and regulators with respect to asbestos make this area of occupational health one of highest priority.

mgs

VIDEOCASSETTE PRICE LIST

CATEGORY I

This category covers cassettes shipped and billed to one place and cassettes shipped to various places but billed to one location.

	<u>10 min.</u>	<u>20 min.</u>	<u>30 min.</u>	<u>60 min.</u>
1	\$30.00	\$41.00	\$51.00	\$79.00
2 - 20	20.30	24.00	\$28.75	41.25
21 - 50	19.30	23.25	27.75	40.00
51 - 100	17.50	21.25	26.25	38.50
101 & over	17.00	20.75	25.25	37.50

CATEGORY II

This category covers cassettes shipped and billed individually, and cassettes held in stock and shipped later.

	<u>10 min.</u>	<u>20 min.</u>	<u>30 min.</u>	<u>60 min.</u>
1	\$30.50	\$41.50	\$51.50	\$79.50
2 - 20	20.80	24.50	29.25	41.75
21 - 50	19.80	23.75	28.25	40.50
51 - 100	18.00	21.75	26.75	39.00
101 & over	17.50	21.25	25.75	38.00

The above prices include cassette labeling and the standard videocassette jacket.

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