



Homer M. Cole - Industrial Hygiene, GOB

MEMORANDUM TO FILE

Dr. E. C. Irby - Medical, EXO

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KAISER'S MANDATORY RESPIRATOR PROGRAM

I had an opportunity today to talk with Tom Walker, Manager of Industrial Hygiene for KAISER ALUMINUM & CHEMICAL CORP., regarding Kaiser's Respiratory Protection Program at its Chalmette Reduction Plant. Tom indicated that the program was started some 4 years ago, when their Vice-president for Industrial Relations was made aware of problems stemming from hydrocarbon exposure in Soderberg reduction operations. At this time, Kaiser apparently set out to do something about its problem and undertook a respirator testing program and strongly encouraged employees to wear respiratory protection on a voluntary basis. They feel that the program is successful, with about 75% participation. Plans are to make the program mandatory at Tacoma and Chalmette October 1 of this year.

The mandatory respirator program will involve all employees while working on a pot. Discipline of employees who do not follow established guidelines will be undertaken. The discipline steps will be: oral warning, written warning, and suspension. Weekly audits will be taken to determine program effectiveness.

In initiating this program, the Industrial Relations and Medical personnel for Kaiser have gone to Mr. Harry Mayfield, Steelworkers' Union Representative for Kaiser, and indicated their concern. After their contact, other meetings were held with local steel representatives at the Chalmette Plant. The primary concern of the union was that a consistent approach be taken between Kaiser plants; that is, if respirators were made mandatory at Chalmette, they should also be mandatory at Tacoma. While Chalmette appears to have a very satisfactory program, I understand that the Tacoma Plant is lagging behind in its efforts toward initiating this program.

I might add that both Chalmette and Tacoma are in violation of the 0.2 mg/m³ coal tar pitch volatile regulations.

It should also be pointed out that, following the release of The Aluminum Association Mortality Study, Kaiser representatives sat down with union leaders and local presidents and covered the

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Mortality Study in depth. It is felt that this meeting also rendered support to their on-going respirator program and served as a means of keeping union members informed. At no time did Kaiser provide union representatives with copies of results of coal tar pitch volatile sampling data.



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