

CC: R. R. Bonczek - Admin., D-9064
F. W. Garvin - ERD, 13519
ERD Division Heads
B. W. Culpepper, M.D.

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TO: H. G. SMYTH

FROM: B. W. KARRH, M.D. *BWK*

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Victims Compensation

The newsletter, "Inside EPA," January 7 issue, ran a two-page story on the CMA activities on this subject, including identifying the two work groups involved and correctly naming the members of one of the groups. These activities have been conducted in a way to preserve confidentiality, at least until after a status report is given to the CMA Executive Committee on January 10. The "Inside EPA" article is sufficiently factual to indicate that someone with considerable knowledge of the CMA activities talked with someone from the publication.

Ethylene Oxide

In a precedent-setting action, a Federal judge has ordered OSHA to issue an emergency temporary standard for limiting worker exposure to ethylene oxide. The Health Research Group, a Nader organization, and the American Federation of State, County, and municipal workers had petitioned the court for this action.

The judge's ruling said that OSHA's failure to respond to a 1981 request for an emergency temporary standard was "a clear error of judgment."

This action could set a precedent for other special interest groups to petition the courts for emergency standards on several materials, such as formaldehyde, where there has been controversy because of OSHA's not setting workplace standards.

Asbestos

The EQC agreed to provide funding for Dr. Selikoff's research plan for development of a useful quantitative, reproducible, analytical method for the evaluation of disability for asbestosis. C&P, Textile Fibers, the Director of Safety, Health, and Environmental Affairs, and the Medical Division will share in the \$34,101 expense.

Formaldehyde

C&P and the Formaldehyde Institute have retained Screenscope, the producer of the videotape "Caring About: Asbestos," to do a similar educational videotape on the health hazards of formaldehyde exposure. The intended audience will be workers and members of the public. Screenscope plans to present all aspects of the issue by including interviews with both pro-industry experts and those who favor a ban of formaldehyde-containing products.

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Formaldehyde (Cont'd.)

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has reportedly petitioned the EPA to regulate formaldehyde. EPA has 60 days to respond to the petition following which NRDC can file suit if the EPA decision is not satisfactory. This probably results from the recent success of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) suit against OSHA over regulating ethylene oxide (EO). We have been concerned that the precedent of the EDF/EO suit would encourage other suits, particularly regarding formaldehyde and benzene.

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