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INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER

August 28, 1978

Supervisors, Plant
Protection & Safety
Safety Supervisors

Usage of Materials Containing Asbestos

During a recent annual industrial hygiene survey at one of our plants, it was discovered that transite was being used in the Heat Treat Department induction furnaces as a support for the induction coils and as an insulator, to name just a couple of reasons.

Transite contains almost 50 percent asbestos fibers, but its usage in the Heat Treat Department does not constitute an occupational health hazard. The problem occurs when bulk transite sheets are machined and excessive asbestos fibers are generated. Transite was being cut by band saw, drilled, etc. to fit inside the furnaces without use of local exhaust ventilation, respirators or other control measures.

Asbestos elimination goals, OSHA requirements and good industrial hygiene practices which must be followed when airborne asbestos fibers are generated are described in Mr. R. J. Black's letter of January 27, 1975 sent to all operations.

In my experience, the highest airborne concentrations are found when sawing asbestos-containing material. The best solution for control of asbestos or other hazardous material, in my opinion, is substituting a less toxic material when feasible.

Melrose Park Plant has fulfilled good industrial hygiene procedures by substituting Glastic Grade UTR glass matt polyester laminate for transite, manufactured by Glastic Corporation, Cleveland, Ohio, and fiberglass pipe wrapping for asbestos pipe wrapping, etc. The substitution for transite was accomplished about five years ago, and I was informed that Glastic is a better material than the asbestos-containing transite. Therefore, substitution can have added benefits also, especially when the costly OSHA requirements must be met.

There are now several manufacturers of asbestos-free material to be used for a wide variety of applications. More information is available from this department or the Melrose Park Plant.

As a reminder, all personnel exposed to asbestos in the past or present must have a medical examination as described in the OSHA standards.

In this same plant other work with asbestos material was reviewed. Asbestos pipe covering was being torn down and replaced without the use of respirators, added ventilation, precautionary cleanup, or other requirements as stated in the government regulations. Procedures were the same for other jobs involving working with asbestos. This practice cannot be allowed to continue in any of our plants. You should review all operations involving asbestos-containing materials and enforce the policy when asbestos must be worked with. All the OSHA requirements must be followed, and substitution is a must whenever possible.

If this department can be of further assistance, please contact us.

D. S. Janetka

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Industrial Hygienist

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cc:
Employe Relations Managers
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Mr. R. J. Black