



THE SOCIETY OF THE PLASTICS INDUSTRY, INC.

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SPI PETITIONS OSHA FOR STAY
OF VINYL CHLORIDE STANDARD

WASHINGTON -- The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc. today petitioned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for a stay of its recently promulgated vinyl chloride worker safety standard on grounds it is impossible for the industry to comply with the respirator requirements of the regulation.

-- The petition asked OSHA to delay its standard until sufficient supplies of approved respirators are available to the industry or until a court rules that compliance with that part of the standard is not required.

Failure to grant the requested relief, according to the SPI petition, would force "large segments of the vinyl chloride monomer and polyvinyl chloride resin industry to cease manufacturing operations after December 31."

SPI contended in its petition to OSHA that the supply of permitted respirators is insufficient to allow the industry to meet requirements of the safety standard which are scheduled to go into effect January 1. Further, SPI said, much of the equipment specified for worker use has not yet been approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, not is it likely to be by January 1.

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The petition said that even if all required NIOSH approvals are made immediately, it would be impossible to make a sufficient supply of respirator equipment available in time to comply with present effective dates of the OSHA standard.

The OSHA standard for the vinyl chloride industry, published October 4, says that effective January 1, 1975, employers must reduce levels of vinyl chloride monomer to one part per million (ppm) averaged over an eight hour period and 5 ppm averaged over any period no longer than 15 minutes. Every employee exposed to levels higher than these must be supplied with respiratory protective devices.

Although supply of the respirators is mandated, wearing of the devices by workers is discretionary for exposures no greater than 25 ppm but would become mandatory by January 1, 1976, whenever levels exceed the 1 and 5 ppm limits.

Respirator supply today, according to SPI, "is only 26 percent of current demand with optimum supply (expeditious NIOSH approvals) being only 78 percent of current demand."

SPI said these figures were prepared solely on demand of the vinyl chloride monomer and polyvinyl chloride resin manufacturers and don't reflect additional demands which might be made by processors, fabricators and other segments of the industry affected by the OSHA standard.

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Meanwhile, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York is expected to hear oral arguments the week of December 16 on a lawsuit asking judicial review of the OSHA standard. The suit was brought by SPI and Hooker Chemicals and has been joined by several individual companies, including, Firestone Plastics, Union Carbide, B. F. Goodrich and Diamond Shamrock.