

June 26, 1974
9:00 A.M.

OSHA VINYL CHLORIDE HEARINGS

OSHA's vinyl chloride hearings resumed this morning at 9 with the industry presenting its case for achievable lower exposure limits in vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride plants.

In yesterday's 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. opening session, OSHA, NIOSH and Union witnesses repeated their support for the proposed "no detectable level" of worker exposure.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital echoed this position in his testimony in which he reported results from "clinical field studies" of workers at Goodyear, Dow and Union Carbide plants.

The URW's witnesses, Bommarito and Peliczky, insisted that OSHA impose the no detectable level and demanded stronger enforcement of all occupational safety and health regulations. The URW's representatives conceded that "older marginal plants" may have difficulty "justifying major alterations" to achieve a no detectable level. However, in the case of new plants, the URW said the problem is one of "will not ability" to protect workers from any exposure to vinyl chloride.

Yesterday's proceedings were almost entirely predictable. While demanding that industry could and should achieve much lower or a "no detectable" level of exposure, most witnesses did concede that more data is needed about the effect of vinyl chloride on humans and that the industry needs time to develop and install new engineering controls. The government's case, as stated publicly, is based largely on the fact there is no known "safe" level of vinyl chloride exposure.

A government witness, reputed to be the world's leading expert on respirator equipment, took a position quite similar to the one that industry experts will express today on these protective devices. The respirator expert pointed out that extensive training would be needed for the widespread use of respirator equipment and that long lead time is necessary even to acquire it.

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(continued)

Fourteen witnesses will speak for SPI at the opening of today's session. Major parts of industry's position were released to the press yesterday in an attempt to offset to some degree the largely negative testimony of yesterday's witnesses.

Following SPI, depending on the amount of cross-examination, the witness schedule calls for presentations by Tenneco, Air Products, and Dow Chemical, which will probably require another evening session.

John J. Bell, Director
External Communications
and Public Affairs

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