

The exterior of a stone building was being renovated by cleaning of its lower portion with hydrofluoric acid and by sandblasting of the upper areas. A person employed in the building obtained a quantity of the acid solution from the cleaning crew for home use. Apparently neither the crew nor the individual was aware of the action of hydrofluoric acid on glass, and the liquid was placed in a glass container which was left in a hallway to be picked up after work. The container was near a doorway to one of the offices. About ten minutes before quitting time a member of the building security force and a female employee were standing at the doorway approximately three feet from the glass container of hydrofluoric acid when it burst, spraying acid and evolved gases on them. The security officer received acid burns on his back and on the backs of his legs which were toward the container, and the woman who was facing the container received such injuries as to cause her death approximately one hour later.

It is a well-established chemical fact that the action of hydrofluoric acid on glass evolves gas as a by-product. Thus the combined etching action of the acid on the glass container and the increased pressure produced by the gas build-up caused the container to burst with the regrettable results above stated.

Manganese as a Toxic Metal -

The Division initiated a manganese surveillance project with the report of two cases of manganese poisoning in the manufacture of railroad track frog switches in one company, and the possibility of a third case in another establishment.

Some of the primary locations of exposure to manganese are: 1, steel plants - pouring of the metal and crushing and sizing of the ferro-manganese metal; 2, welding - the use of manganese-coated electrodes; 3, manufacture of manganese carbonyl - evolution of manganese vapors; and 4, scrap yards - the cutting (burning) of metal containing manganese.

Although no additional frank cases of clinical manganese toxicity have been demonstrated to date, high values of manganese in urines have been found.

This study is continuing and the locations of the positive results are being kept under strict surveillance.

Occupational Health for Nurses -

A full-time, five-day course in occupational health for registered professional nurses in industry will be offered beginning Monday, November 8, 1965 by the Department of Environmental Medicine of New York University Medical Center, in cooperation with the American Association of Industrial Nurses. The course is limited to nurses with experience of five years or less in occupational health.

The program will be under the direction of Dr. David H. Goldstein, professor of environmental medicine. Sara P. Wagner, R.N., will serve as coordinator for the nurse faculty. This is the tenth consecutive year that the course has been given.

Instruction will consist of lectures and conferences given by the combined medical and nursing faculty of the Medical Center. Subjects to be covered during the week include: occupational health nursing as viewed by management, the physician and the nurse; environmental hazards; safety; mental health, individual and group behavior in an industrial setting; counselling and interview techniques; legal aspects of nursing in industry (malpractice and workmen's compensation); rehabilitation; and retirement and the problems of older workers.