

MEMORANDUM

DRAFT

Date: September 7, 1977

To: File

From: W. B. Reitze

cc: P. Kotin, M.D.
W. R. Paul, M.D.

Subject: PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EMPLOYEE LOCKERS

The recent Corporate decision to provide protective clothing to those Johns-Manville workers involved with asbestos fiber or asbestos products where fiber is not firmly bound has raised a number of questions from our operating divisions. In an effort to perhaps clarify some of these questions, Dr. Kotin wrote to the medical directors of ten of the large U.S. corporations including Shell Oil, Union Carbide, Celanese, Alcoa, DuPont, Exxon, General Electric, Bethlehem Steel, U.S. Steel, and Kaiser Aluminum. The question was asked of the medical directors what type of protective clothing program was in force in their corporations to protect employees from both carcinogenic agents, as well as other potentially harmful materials. All of the companies responded, some in more detail than others. In summary, we may make the following conclusions:

1. All the major companies do furnish protective clothing to various employee groups. The decision to furnish clothing is based upon the potential hazard of the materials handled. The chemical and oil companies are protecting employees against materials that may work into an employee's clothing and be absorbed through the skin.

MT-001419

Others are concerned with an employee exposure as well as a family exposure to such items as toxic dusts including lead. Most large firms also furnish specialized protective clothing which will protect an employee against heat, cold, flame, molten metal, water, chemical splashes, etc.

2. The laundering of protective clothing is handled in a number of ways. Usually where large numbers of people are involved the laundering is done in-house. If there is a very small employee population involved, an outside laundry service or uniform supply service is utilized. It is extremely rare that contaminated clothing from the workplace is sent home to be laundered by the employee's family.

3. The frequency of clean clothes issuance varies with the particular substance the employee handles, weekly being the longest period, daily being the most common period, and in a number of cases with chemical carcinogens, protective clothing is changed 3 or 4 times per day. The issuance of clothing is usually handled by utilizing a system similar to the tool crib method used by most large industrials for issuance of tools and supplies.

4. Lockers are furnished to employees where ~~needed~~ and where needed, dual lockers are furnished. However, with the use of the tool crib system, dual lockers are not needed, since the contaminated clothing is deposited for laundering on a daily basis. and

5. The reasons for furnishing protective clothing and the methods of administration vary widely within the companies polled. Few companies have corporate-wide programs which apply across the board to all their operations. The majority, because of the vast diversification in operations, leave the actual administration of a protective clothing program to the location. The mandate for protective clothing, of course, is issued by the corporate environmental health department. Some corporations state their policy rather plainly that it is to protect the employee, to protect the employee's family, to aid in quality control (clean room activities) or merely to enhance the corporation's public image (gas station uniforms). Almost all the major corporations furnish protective clothing of the type discussed free of charge to their employees. In some cases, protective clothing has been a subject for the bargaining table and is negotiated with the labor contract. In a few instances (DuPont with chloroaniline and tetraethyl lead), "protective clothing committees" within the plant have been set up to determine a fair and equitable method for clothing issuance.

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6. All medical directors feel quite strongly that persons handling carcinogenic agents should receive protective clothing, not only for their own protection but also for the protection of their families should dusts, oils, or chemicals be carried out of the plant on the workers' clothing.

ALUMINUM COMPANY OF AMERICA

ALCOA BUILDING • PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15201



ALCOA

1977 July 27

Paul Kotin, M.D.
Senior Vice President
Health Safety and Environment
Johns-Manville Corporation
Greenwood Plaza
Denver, Colorado 80217

Dear Paul:

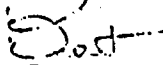
We do not in any of our plants provide work clothing--specifically apparel--on a regular basis. The closest we come to that is disposable paper clothing for employees who periodically go into certain baghouses. But other than this, nothing else.

I would recommend your contacting either Dr. MacRoy Gasque, Vice President and Director, Health Affairs, or Dick Henderson at Olin (the latter is their chief industrial hygienist) in Stamford, Connecticut as regards their clothing practice for workers in mercury cell room exposures. Off the record, I think they go a bit overboard, but it represents one point of view. For another, I would recommend review of the NIOSH proposed Mercury Standard in the work clothing section.

I hope these leads will be of help. Fortunately, in our mercury cell operations we have been able to control exposure without recourse to clothes. We do, however, provide a commercial laundry sized washer there, but largely on the premise of keeping mercury out of their home laundries.

Best regards from Gaby and me to you and Pauli.

Cordially,


Bertram D. Dinman, M.D.
Corporate Medical Director

vmd

*Mr. Lett
Do you
want me
to write to
either one*

MT-001440

Nov. 15.

הערה: יש להוסיף...

It goes without saying that any manufacturer with an ounce of intelligence realizes the dollars and cents value of industrial health and, when shown, is perfectly willing to spend money to make the conditions of his plants conducive to this result. Furthermore, he has humanitarian instincts over and beyond the money angle and is just as anxious as the employee and more anxious than the rank outsider in having the best possible health conditions in his operations.

of both employees and the public because much attention has been paid to money compensation to workers whose health has already been lost, to state legislation for an occupational disease law in cooperation with the insurance companies, to answering criticisms of industry after it has been attacked in some specific incident. Too little attention has been given to what industry is doing toward eliminating occupational disease. In short, the engineer and the physician who work quietly and effectively on the long range job have had too little public notice while the lawyers, the law makers and the insurance companies have had the lime-light. The latter group are essential but a constant parade of their activities builds up a resistance toward industry all out of proportion to the true situation.

it and thereby call attention to conditions that existed before?" I feel certain there are some members of the Air Hygiene Foundation whose operating people think it might be just, as well if nothing were said about their support of the fund. Public relations men have just the opposite view-point. They think all these things should be talked about publicly.

sensing a damage suit for possible "sufferers" before the improvement was made, I cannot see that the attitude of silence is good in the long run. Everyone, whether an industrial worker or not, knows that plant conditions are constantly improving. Perhaps he knows this best if he is an industrial employee. The person who knows least about it is one who belongs to that vast army known as the general public. Announcements of plant improvements or innovations which improve the health and the working conditions of employees should be constantly passed on to the public which is the final referee in any broad discussion leading to legislation.

Furthermore, industry can build for itself a still broader acceptance in the public relations task it has to accomplish, if it gets the public to understand that it is, after all, human. In industry's story of itself to the public it has stressed achievement but has done little on the humanitarian side. Research and development, improved products, lower manufacturing costs, the benefits of integration, creation of jobs and kindred stories are being constantly told in institutional messages while the things industry is doing to improve the health and safety of its employees is infrequently mentioned.

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