

AUG 18 1977

Raybestos  Manhattan

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JOHN H. MARSH
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

August 16, 1977



TO: Messrs. B. Iwarsson - Abex Corp.
W. Jones - Safeguard Automotive Corp.
J. Riopelle - The Bendix Corp.
W. Sleeth - Royal Industries, Inc.
E. Zacharias - Molded Materials Co.

SUBJECT: NIOSH Contract with Mt. Sinai School of Medicine
for Investigation of Health Hazards in Brake
Lining Repairs and Maintenance Workers
Occupationally Exposed to Asbestos

In addition to the contract forwarded to you on August 5th by Bob Mereness, you should be aware of three papers recently published by Mt. Sinai personnel and the preliminary information released by NIOSH at the American Industrial Hygiene Conference in New Orleans in June.

Although all three Mt. Sinai papers relate to the same investigation of brake maintenance workers in New York City, copies of each are enclosed because they have slightly different titles and emphasis and contributors to the papers differ. They are listed in order of publication.

1. Asbestos Exposure of Brake Repair Workers in the United States - Lorimer, Rohl, Miller, Nicholson and Selikoff published in the Mt. Sinai Journal of Medicine - May-June 1976.
2. Asbestos Exposure During Brake Lining Maintenance and Repair - Rohl, Langer, Wolff and Weisman published in Environmental Research (I. J. Selikoff, Editor in Chief) in August, 1976. The paper had been previously given at the Annual Conference of the American Industrial Hygiene Association in 1975.
3. Asbestos Content of Dust Encountered in Brake Maintenance and Repair - Rohl, Langner, Klimentidis, Wolff and Selikoff published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine January 1977. This paper was originally given in London March 25, 1976 at a meeting of the Society for Occupational Medicine.

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Also included are comments on the last paper by Newhouse and Smither that appeared in the May issue of Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine. I call your particular attention to the controversy concerning very small fibers and the criticism of the OSHA standard because it is limited to analysis by optical microscopy.

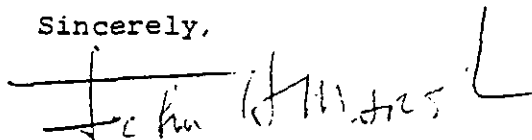
To the best of my knowledge, the latest NIOSH material is still in preliminary form. I am enclosing copies of the charts that were shown at the American Industrial Hygiene Conference in June and provided to me by NIOSH last month. This includes data on exposure in manufacturing as well as during brake repair.

The NIOSH data, showing very low time weighted average exposures for brake service mechanics in the studies they conducted, confirm the fact that the working conditions observed by Mt. Sinai personnel were not typical of the brake service industry. It is clear that the poor conditions observed by Mt. Sinai personnel were caused by improper work practices shown as blowing out drum with compressed air, machining without exhaust ventilation, etc. The fact that such conditions can exist indicates the industry has not done an adequate job of educating its customers in the safe handling of asbestos containing friction materials.

NIOSH will eventually publish guidelines for brake service mechanics but this will probably take quite a while. I suggest it would be useful for leaders in the industry to take some initiative in this direction either through an ad hoc committee of the AIA/NA or possibly through the FMSI. The AIA/NA has the advantage of having access, on an international basis, to scientific experts on medical questions and to technical experts on dust measurements.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



/as

Enclosures

cc: Messrs. R. H. Mereness
E. W. Drislane