

JUL 17 1978

Memo to File

Subject: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Inquiry Concerning
Non-Asbestos Friction Materials

On June 30, 1978 after returning from the Institute's Annual Membership Meeting, I took the day off to recuperate. In the morning I received a phone call from the Office concerning an inquiry from a Mr. Manny Lorenzo of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (Telephone: 202-426-4850). Mr. Don Steis of Abex Corporation had referred Mr. Lorenzo to the Institute.

Miss Collins of the Office relayed a question from Mr. Lorenzo to the effect as to what are the materials used to replace asbestos in brake linings? Also, what are the relative costs of these new materials for brake linings? In general, this was a inquiry which could take an unlimited answer, and I indicated to Miss Collins that Mr. Lorenzo should call me when I was in the Office on Monday, July 3. However, Mr. Lorenzo apparently needed the answer then and there, so I gave an estimate to fill his needs.

I indicated that all material information and formulation data is considered proprietary by manufacturers of friction materials. Also there is no interchange of cost or price information and therefore I would have to rely on the background that I had when I was in industry years ago. I indicated there were probably two basic materials being used to replace asbestos. One was a variation of a steel fiber or steel wool type material. This has been used in some semi-metallic compounds. This was one approach. The other approach was a variation of synthetic fibers, most likely fiberglass variations. As regards relative costs, I estimated the costs for the metal fiber approach to be 2-3 times the regular asbestos type compound cost and I estimated the synthetic fiberglass approach to have a cost about 100% more than conventional asbestos type compounds. I indicated that this was not straight material cost but that there were essentially higher processing and fabricating costs with both the steel fibers and the fiberglass as compared to conventional asbestos type mixes. These estimates were relayed to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which they acknowledged.

In reviewing this, I must qualify my estimates, which I didn't have the chance to do with the NHTSA, by indicating that these were based on moderate to short runs for replacement purposes. It is entirely possible, on an original equipment basis, with mass production, that the relative cost could approach a straight comparison of the material costs. I neglected to take into consideration the higher costs that have been incurred since I left the industry for controlling and working with asbestos, as well as the considerably increased prices for asbestos that have been put into effect over the past several years.

The foregoing is to make my comments relayed to the NHTSA a matter of record.

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Executive Director

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