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May 5, 1975

Many of you have probably seen the enclosed article distributed nationally by the Associated Press on April 27. It should be given careful attention because it points to an area where industry is especially vulnerable to third party suits because of lack of knowledge on the part of workers of hazards associated with the materials they are handling.

As workers in small business are more apt to use poor work practices because of lack of knowledge of occupational hazards, the likelihood of occurrence of injury or disease is greater than in larger and more sophisticated operations. The Borel Case established beyond question the duty of manufacturers to warn of hazards.

Assistant Secretary Stender has repeatedly and forcefully stated that manufacturers have the obligation to educate their customers in the safe use of their products. This is not an OSHA responsibility.

It is questionable whether a caution label such as that required by the OSHA Asbestos Standard is sufficient warning in cases where a significant hazard can exist. We know from the results of our own field tests and those conducted by Mt. Sinai personnel that high dust levels can exist in brake service shops. Instruction sheets have been distributed to all Grey-Rock and Raybestos distributors of friction materials describing proper procedures but we should make certain that these instruction sheets get down to the small shops where they are most needed.

We should also make certain we have adequately covered other areas where asbestos-containing products may be processed in such a fashion as to cause unacceptable dust levels.

John H. Marsh

Enclosure

Disease Found in 25% of Small-Business Workers

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WASHINGTON, April 27 (AP)—A study done for the Government has found that one out of every four workers in a sample of small businesses employing from eight to 150 people has an occupationally derived disease and that 89 percent of those are not reported as required to the Labor Department.

The study was done in the state of Washington and Oregon by the University of Washington for the National Institute of Occupational Safety and health. It is to be published in about six weeks.

Some of the diseases listed

in the study included chronic health and safety subcommittee respiratory disease due to asbestos and other fibrous-like dust in work areas; loss of hearing due to noise; eye cataracts from infrared radiation, and increased lead absorption in the blood.

On lead absorption, the report says, "If exposures continue, serious illness may result and the long range implications of high levels of lead stored in the blood is unknown." "The extent of such conditions among the employed population are no where available," the report says.

The chairman of the House

revealing a possible horror story of national proportions."

"If we had statistics from an in-depth medical survey of the nation's workers, they would truly paint a picture of disease and chronic illness as horrifying as conditions in the sweatshops of the last century," Mr. Daniels said.

The study was conducted between 1972 and 1974 in three industrial areas of Tacoma and Seattle, Wash., and Portland, Ore., and an agricultural area of Yakima County, Wash.