It is obvious that good preventive maintenance must go hand in hand with effective dust control measures if the standards recently announced by OSHA are to be achieved.

OSHA Regulations

On June 7, 1972, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration established by the Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 issued standards regulating asbestos dust exposures. These occupational standards deal with (1) permissible concentrations of asbestos fibers, (2) methods of compliance, (3) warning signs and labeling of potentially dangerous products, (4) monitoring of dust levels, (5) medical examinations for employees, and (6) recordkeeping by employers. These standards have one basic purpose — to protect employees from exposure to potentially hazardous amounts of asbestos dust in their workplace.

The major obligations placed on employers, and industry in general, by the new standards can be summed up as follows:

A. The employer shall maintain a healthy workplace, making sure that no employee is exposed to concentrations of airborne asbestos fiber in excess of established limits.

B. Where the exposure limits are exceeded, the employee shall be notified in writing of the situation by his employer and shall be informed of corrective measures being undertaken to reduce his exposure to a safe level.

C. Engineering controls and the implementation of safe work practices are the approved permanent methods of correction.

D. While corrective measures are being instituted, the employee shall be protected by other means, such as the wearing of an approved respirator provided by his employer, or by shift rotation.

E. The use of respirators or shift rotation to achieve control is not permitted except (1) during the time required to install engineering controls or implement safe work practices, or (2) in situations where such controls or practices are not technically feasible, or (3) in emergencies.

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