NOTED
HMB

April 1, 1952

Mr. E. M. Hudgins
General Claim Agent
The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company
First National Bank Building
Richmond 10, Virginia

Dear Mr. Hudgins:

Your letter has been referred to this department for an answer.

Type A Stonefelt Insulation referred to in your letter is composed primarily of "Rock Wool". We are familiar with the type of complaint that has come to your attention and have noted that it occurs most often during hot summer months when men are working under conditions which cause them to perspire freely. As a rule the irritation or rash is developed only by employees who have never handled the material before.

It is our experience that an immunity speedily develops and that they are no longer bothered after a week or two of exposure. The degree of irritation is in ratio to the sensitivity of the skin of the particular employee. An occasional instance of hypersensitivity -- or allergy -- has been observed during the 40 years we have been manufacturing this material but these are exceedingly rare.

Rock Wool fibres when examined microscopically are revealed as slender spicules. When particles of this material are rubbed against the skin they will have an irritating effect which, however, will be a physical or mechanical, rather than a chemical, reaction. Experiments conducted for us some time ago by the Harvard School of Public Health conclusively determined that our Rock Wool contained nothing of a toxic or poisonous character.

For this reason and for the further reason that workers speedily become immunized, it has been unnecessary to develop any detailed formula for prevention. However, goggles can be used to keep the materials from the eyes, and the irritating effects of initial exposure can be minimized if you will suggest that em-

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plagued very long employees all times and keep their collars [illegible] around their throats. Their ankles may be protected by [illegible] the trouser legs close to prevent the material from coming [illegible] in contact with the skin. A good suit of overalls would be the best garment. A shower with at the end of the work day will also help remove any particles which might adhere to the skin. Where a rash develops, the man should be cautioned against scratching too vigorously, since this may lead to a secondary infection.

I trust the foregoing will be of some assistance to you, but if you require further information please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Very truly yours,

Arthur L. Fisk, Jr.
Legal Department

ALF:s

bl sc C. E. Bryant
H. M. Jackson