Johns-Manville **Internal Correspondence**

To: H. Moreno

Date: 20 August 1973

From: Dr. George Wright

Copies: S. Lane
F. May
J. McKinney

Subject:

DO NOT DISCARD

Some time ago, among others, I expressed the opinion that it would be worth considering a try at removing all Amosite from Maranite. For my part, this was based upon the absence of a specific hygiene standard for Amosite and the fact that Selikoff was using the adverse health experience of the Patterson, N. J. plant as an example of the unusually serious toxic effect of Amosite. In addition, at that time we were impressed with the concept that if we could remove asbestos from those exposures where control was difficult for the "user" and where Selikoff was "active" - insulation and construction in general - it would be useful.

Since then two developments have occurred. The U.K. has set a standard of 2 fibers per cc for Amosite - the same as for chrysotile. They are of the opinion that Amosite is not more toxic than chrysotile. Admittedly, there is a paucity of data about pure Amosite exposure, but it would appear that they believe the Patterson experience was due to very heavy doses - levels rarely met in the past uses of chrysotile. I am inclined to agree with them but still have some reservations that the "nature" of Amosite fiber might lead to greater retention of inhaled fibers. Second, it is now clear that Selikoff is pursuing studies of industrial populations other than "insulation workers" and there is little or no validity to the idea that removal of asbestos from certain products will limit his sphere of interest and activity.

At this time, I believe the use of Amosite in circumstances where those engaged in manufacture or use of a product will not be exposed to more than 2 fibers per cc TWA or a peak of more than 10 f/cc would be acceptable from both a health protection and a medico-legal point of view. This will not be easy to achieve.

I have reviewed the old and current dust conditions at Billerica and have talked with Bill Reitze about the health experience of employees there - insofar as that is known. It is apparent that Billerica has had one of the poorest

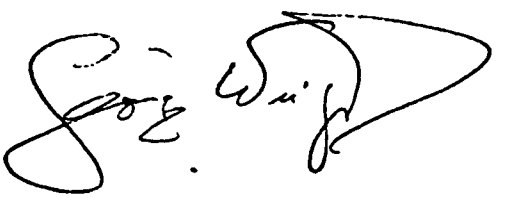
Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/11237/1

health experiences in the Corporation with respect to asbestosis and cancer. This is readily explained by the past high exposures... Although there has been improvement in the dust conditions, few stations have achieved 2 f/cc, many are still above 5, and too many are much higher than that. From the records there is inconsistency of performance - stations fluctuating from 5 to 25 or more fibers per cc. Moreover, the conclusion that wearing a mask is being substituted for proper control seems inescapable. There also are questions about current methods of solid waste disposal.

Engineering controls properly and continously supervised to guarantee holding the fiber count below 2 f/cc should be achievable and in the light of what we know now, is required to assure the health of those engaged in manufacturing at Billerica. The proper use of a mask for known "temporary" higher exposure, the correction of which is in progress, can be tolerated for a short time but should not be condoned as a substitute for proper controls. If brief exposure to peaks above 10 are essential, a properly used "ventilated" helmet is required.

Protection of the users of the product must also be considered. The products used in the metals industry ought to be controllable by adequate consultation with the users. We need to know what is the actual exposure of users in other fields where control is more difficult, such as construction work, and where the user might be ignorant of potential hazard or inclined to ignore warning labels. One cannot depend upon a high level of protection motivation in such areas. If Maranite poses a health threat for these users, the situation must be remedied.

If my comments raise what appear to be insurmountable obstacles bear in mind the achievements along these lines elsewhere in the Corporation in the recent past.



Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/11237/2