cc: H. M. Ball
R. A. Robinson, Louisville (Special Delivery)
E. D. Cox (3)

WIBH

December 2, 1957

Mr. John Wendt, Insulation Engineer
Whirlpool Corporation
Evansville, Indiana

Dear Mr. Wendt:

I understand that recently you requested information concerning the possible association of silicosis and the handling of our Mineral Fiber insulation. Your inquiry was passed to me for reply.

To the best of our knowledge our Mineral Fiber does not contain any free silica, nor does it produce any form of pulmonary fibrosis or pneumoconiosis. For your reference I have enclosed a copy of a paper by L. T. Fairhall et al, entitled "Rock Wool In Relation to Health". Unfortunately, I do not have any additional copies of a further reference, "Negative Chest Findings in A Mineral Wool Industry" by J. L. Harper, et al, U. S. Employee. This appeared in the "Journal Indiana State Medical Association", Volume 50 in 1957. The summary of this article was:

1. 84 workers exposed to mineral wool for periods ranging from 7 to 29 years showed no x-ray evidence of silicosis or fibrosis of the lungs.

2. The exaggerated linear findings exhibited were shown to be a characteristic of that community for that same age group.

A survey was conducted some years ago by the Industrial Health Section of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company at one of our plants where mineral wool had been manufactured for nearly forty years. This survey was most thorough and included the examination of groups of fume-exposed employees, a great majority of whom had been engaged in the manufacturing and handling of mineral wool for more than ten years, a large number for more than twenty-five years. Not a single case of silicosis or even of diffuse lung fibrosis was discovered as a result of these examinations and we were advised that we might safely conclude that mineral wool was "innocuous from the point of lung fibrosis".

We do not believe that there is any occupational pulmonary disease hazard associated with manufacture or use of our material. However, if there are any further specific questions which you might have, or if there is any way in which I may be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth W. Smith, M.D.
Medical Director

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