Gypsum Association

201 North Wells Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606 , (312) 726-5675

August 15, 1973

PLAINTIFF'S EXHIBIT

UC-5455

To the Special Committee on Asbestos in Joint Treatment Compound

Gentlemen:

On August 8, 1973, the Association's Special Committee met in Chicago to plan a field testing program to evaluate the hazard levels resulting from dry mixing and sanding of joint treatment compounds.

Present were:

E. R. Kiehl	The Celotex Corporation
E. D. O'Neill	Georgia-Pacific Corporation
J. Volk	National Gypsum Company
J. D. Cornell	United States Gypsum Company
J. H. Crumbaugh	United States Gypsum Company
K. S. Freeman	United States Gypsum Company
A. V. Abnee, Jr.	Gypsum Association
H. 3. Carlsen	Gypsum Association
F. J. Rogers	Gypsum Association

The meeting opened with a historical review of events leading to the selection of this committee. Discussion followed of the problem areas involved in the use of joint compound containing asbestos. It was also pointed out that other materials in joint compound are released during dry mixing and joint sanding that may also be considered harmful. These include quartz, mica, silica and nuisance dust. The basic problem is that OSHA has set hazard levels on the amount of asbestos fibers that can be released that would affect the health and safety of the worker exposed to asbestos. The OSHA law (Section 1910.93) is specific in the fiber count allowed, and in requiring protection where exposure exceeds stated limits.

Moreover, the committee felt strongly that the industry had an obligation to its customers, generally contractors, to caution them when asbestos was involved in their products, and to give them guidance so that protection could be afforded to workers exposed to the hazard.

As a result of detailed discussion of the problem and how OSHA law will affect the use of joint treatment compound, the committee developed the following statement of scope to cover its activity.

"The scope of the Special Committee shall be to establish recommended practices for handling gypsum wallboard joint treatment compound in order to comply with current and anticipated environmental health standards."

GP036 2038

As the meeting progressed, Mr. Joseph Volk was elected Chairman, and Mr. H. B. Carlsen, Secretary of the Committee.

The committee next reviewed the preliminary test data available from National Gypsum Company and United States Gypsum Company. These reports indicated that sanding of joints would release asbestos fibers within prescribed OSHA limits, while the mixing of dry joint compound would exceed limits. In order to acquire more definitive information, a pilot field testing program was developed. It was contemplated that a test program would be most effective conducted under extreme severe conditions. Therefore, the following circumstances were agreed upon.

1. Test location - Denver area.
   It was deemed desirable to conduct field testing in a geographic area of highest altitude where barometric pressure would influence the rate of fallout of dust and fiber. The area would also afford a more stable atmosphere for temperature and humidity control.

2. Joint compound product - Of five common products considered, it was decided that both a dry and a ready mix compound would be tested. The dry product should be a wallboard topping compound since it would most readily release asbestos fibers and other contaminants when sanded and it also represented the most frequently used of the dry compounds. The premixed product selected was ready mixed finishing compound for the same reasons.

3. Test units - It was considered advantageous if a large project of single family housing could be utilized, preferably separate homes. Twelve units would be needed - six for dry product and six for ready mix.

4. Amount of samples - It was determined that there were six manufacturers of joint treatment compound within the Association. Therefore, two test units would be assigned to each manufacturer, one for dry compound and one for ready mix.

In the dry mix, ten 25 lb. bags would be required of which seven would be used for joint treatment sanding and three for the mixing test. Five pails of ready mix would be used for joint treatment of the second test unit. Manufacturers who do not produce ready mix topping compound would be asked to supply all purpose ready mix joint compound instead. A total of 60 bags of dry topping compound would be required and 30 pails of ready mix. Additionally, one pallet of 36 empty plastic pails would be required for the mixing at test site.

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5. Preparation of samples - In order that there be no disclosure of which manufacturer's product is being used, it was proposed that unmarked bags and pails be supplied for packaging. A coded letter or number would be assigned to each manufacturer by the Association's confidential depository to maintain strict confidence of the individual samples. The assigned code letter or number would then be clearly marked on the bag or pail by each participating member.

   Shipment of the products would be to a designated warehouse where any shipping tags would be removed from the samples.

6. Conduct of the test - The gypsum wallboard contractor would apply the finishing compounds, six dry and six premixed, over the taped joints in the twelve test units. After proper set, representatives of the committee would assemble at the test site, together with an independent testing laboratory representative to observe and sample airborne dust resulting from the pole sanding and dry mixing operations. The contractor would supply the sander who would wear the proper respirators, eye protection and test instrumentation. It is anticipated that the sanding tests would require two days. The mixing tests can be accomplished concurrently.

7. Third Party witness - The designated witnessing agency would be present during the two day test to record and measure the hazardous elements and concentrations of dust resulting from sanding and dry mixing. A report is to be issued by the agency. Application of joint compound is to be observed by an Association staff member prior to the test.

The committee next addressed itself to the selection of an appropriate laboratory capable of conducting independent testing. Three possible organizations were suggested and are to be approached by committee members for evaluation of equipment, experience, availability, personnel and fees.

Those suggested were:

National Loss Control Service Corp. (Div. of Kemper Insurance)
Long Grove, Illinois

Industrial Hygiene Foundation of America
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

George D. Clayton and Associates
Southfield, Michigan

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The Association will issue all contracts for the work and arrangements with the test site contractor and arrange for coding and storage of materials and coordination of the pilot program.

The next subject considered by the committee was the OSHA labeling requirements for manufactured joint treatment products containing asbestos and other hazardous products. It was recommended that all manufacturers label bags and pails with the standard warning statement contained in OSHA regulations 1910.93a, as follows:

CAUTION

CONTAINS ASBESTOS FIBERS

AVOID CREATING DUST

BREATHING ASBESTOS DUST

MAY CAUSE SERIOUS BODILY HARM

The committee recommended that in addition to the mandatory OSHA warning, a second precautionary label statement for other products also appear on bags and pails. The statement as reviewed by Association legal counsel is as follows:

CAUTION

When mixing and/or dry sanding this product wear eye protection and a respirator which is U.S. Bureau of Mines approved for toxic, nuisance and pneumoconiosis-producing dusts. Wet sanding or sponging is recommended where practicable.

For ready mix products, omit phrase "mixing and/or" in first line of the statement.

Finally, the committee agreed that a target date for the pilot tests would be the week of September 10, 1973, in order that a report could be prepared for the semiannual meeting in October 1973.

Yours very truly,

GYPSUM ASSOCIATION

H. B. Carlsen

H. B. Carlsen, Secretary
Special Committee
on Joint Compound

HBC:mj

cc: To the members of the
Manufacturing and Mining,
Safety and Technical Committees

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