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UNITED STATES MARITIME COMMISSION

WASHINGTON

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LEGAL DEPARTMENT

January 8, 1944

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Bureau of Ships
Navy Department
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen: Attn: Captain Ingram, Room 2074, Building T5

Yesterday I received a long distance call from Mr. W. G. Hazard, Industrial Hygiene Division of New Jersey, Trenton, New Jersey, in which Mr. Hazard stated that the union men at New York Shipbuilding Co. had asked their help regarding the use of Amosite for pipe insulation on Navy vessels they are constructing.

I happen to know the union official, McCloskey, who is not easily put off and who is distinctly on the reasonable side. They ask: (1) how generally is Amosite used, (2) will the Navy allow the use of anything else, and (3) what protection, if any, is needed.

It seems to me these are reasonable questions and should be answered. I know Hazard very well - he is a U. S. Public Health Service officer assigned to New Jersey for the duration. His only desire is to help the company get on with its job and do it without damaging anyone's health.

Hazard stated that Dr. Goldman of the Bethesda Labs (U.S.P.H.S.) found the Amosite to be mostly asbestos. Dust counts in the room where the men were working were very much higher than anyone would recommend - they ran up to 25 million. A figure of 5 million for asbestos is recommended.

If this material must be used, I suggest the men be required to wear Bureau of Mines dust respirators approved for the nuisance dusts, or else that the material be applied wet. If the latter expedient is impracticable the job ought to be ventilated.

We would point out that we had some bad spots in baby aircraft carrier construction at our Kaiser Vancouver yard. After a little bit of work with the Labor-Management group we got the men to wear air line respirators and they now use them without making any objection. The use of dust respirators in both Navy and Maritime yards is sketchy. Both organizations could save a lot of trouble by having them used more - just as the mining industry has done.



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Please write or telephone as soon as possible as the matter is urgent. We can easily have a labor disturbance, especially if we ignore the complaint. It may be better to handle it verbally - hence the request that you telephone me (LONgwood 2380). I will then phone Hazard at once or you can.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Drinker

Philip Drinker
Chief Health Consultant

Cc: Comdr. H. K. Sessions
U. S. Maritime Commission
Philadelphia, Penna.



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