

Once again some delay has occurred in getting out a further Newsletter to members. My excuse is work demands and holidays.

A meeting of Council members was held on 20 February 1981, to coincide with the Occupational Hygiene Subcommittee of the NH & MRC. It was decided that, because of delays in processing membership applications, their rate of flow, and review of several, it would be fair and reasonable to commence memberships for all from 1 January 1981. That means no additional membership fee is required until January, 1982. The minutes of that meeting are attached.

Dr. Trevor Ogden, Principal Research Scientist, of the Health and Safety Executive, is presently visiting Australia. He is addressing a joint meeting of AIOH and ANZSOM at Sydney University on 11 May 1981, and a further meeting at Sydney University on 20 May, 1981. His papers are "Total Dust Measurement, Where Do We Go From Here" and "Current Research at the Occupational Medicine and Hygiene Laboratories, H.S.E.". Due to generosity of A.C.I. Ltd., and to a lesser extent, AIOH, Dr. Ogden will also be visiting Melbourne to meet and address local members and other interested bodies.

Leo Ruschena, State Electricity Commission, Victoria, has written the Institute putting forward his views on the role of the occupational hygienist in Australia, inviting comment on the need for discussion on this important matter, and a suggested programme for a meeting at which various points of view would be put. A copy of the letter is attached and your comment at an early date would be appreciated.

Jerry Coles has had correspondence with the American Board of Examinations of the American Industrial Hygiene Association, on the possibility of having examinations carried out in Australia. This would need the attendance of a member of the Board here. As this Institute does not have the finances to pay for such a visit, your views on sponsoring a visit by applicants' contributions, assisted by or totally supported by industries' contributions are also sought.

The next meeting of scientists and engineers in occupational hygiene is being planned by Tony Findlay probably for mid-August. It is intended to coincide with a meeting of the Occupational Hygiene Subcommittee which will allow some distant interstate people to attend. A meeting of the Institute will also be held following those meetings.

A short comment on the issue raised by George Lopez on protective clothing, has been made by Olga Pitt (Kasansky) and is attached.

There has been a flurry of activity in NSW on residual formaldehyde exposure from U.F. foam installations in private homes. This has resulted from media publicity and proposed bans in the United States. In only one instance has a significant concentration been found, persisting for several weeks after treatment. Other homes tested had been insulated for varying periods from 3 months to more than a year.

Asbestos in areas of "public" occupation continue to be investigated on a large scale in this State, a number showing quite severe deterioration, but all airborne fibre results have been very low. Nevertheless, varying palliative treatments, sealing or removal, in these instances are being recommended.

There has also been considerable recent publicity about exposure of the public to pesticides from aerial spraying in a number of areas, resulting in considerable concern. These are being investigated, but are unlikely to be significant.

Pam de Silva has requested information on the present status of the Racal Airstream Helmets, and any amendments to the NSW Approvals List of Personal Protective Equipment. The latter has not been amended since April of last year (1980) although a number of items have been tested and approved since that date. The approvals are individually issued by the Department of Industrial Relations, and when time is available, they are included in the general list. That time has not been available. The present status of Racal Helmets is attached.

If you have any worthy news items, of technical interest, could they please be forwarded.

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President



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13 May 1981

What's News in "Approved" Personal Protective Equipment

We are often asked by friends and acquaintances for "news" of approvals. We put out our last "additions and amendments" sheets for the items approved by the Department of Industrial Relations and tested by our laboratory, way back in January 1980. We hope to revise this list entirely in the near future.

A lot has happened, mostly in the field of respirators (if you want more details either contact us, the NSW Department of Industrial Relations or the manufacturer concerned). In a nutshell:

- Two more respirator manufacturers, MSA (Aust) Pty. Ltd. and Norton (Aust) Pty. Ltd. have Australian Standards Association Approval on some of their cartridge respirators (in addition to CIG, James North (Aust) Pty. Ltd., and Protector Safety Pty. Ltd. who are all licensed).
- 3M (Aust) Pty. Ltd. have D.I.R. approval on their Model 8725 organic vapour/acid gas respirator, and their Model 8727 ammonia/methylamine respirators under conditions similar to those governing the use of half face cartridge respirators. The Model 9920 dust, fume and mist respirator (with an outlet valve) now has DIR approval under conditions similar to those of half face medium efficiency dust cartridge respirators.
- Note: A new SAA draft standard on respirators will be published shortly and this will incorporate disposable and powered dust respirators that have not been covered by the Respiratory Protection Standard up until now.
- A series of positive-pressure demand self-contained breathing apparatus has been approved by the DIR. It is the PA80P series sold by Drager (Aust) Pty. Ltd.
The approved times of use are subject to the size of the air cylinder(s) used.
- The Racal Safety "Airstream" Helmet, AHL, has had its DIR approval upgraded from a nuisance dust respirator to terms equivalent to those given a low efficiency dust cartridge respirator. When the unit is used with a G11 filter (originally referred to as G1150), the Airstream, AHL/G11, is approved by the DIR under terms similar to a medium efficiency dust halfface cartridge respirator. Other developments are expected soon.
- Ear-muff approvals have boomed. See the "Attenuation of Hearing Protection's" booklet by the NAL Applied Noise Research Group of the Commonwealth Department of Health (3rd edition, Nov. 1980) or the list of Approved Hearing Protectors updated frequently by the DIR.

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"Changing Fashions in Clothing"

In reply to L.G. Lopez's letter about protective clothing, the overall situation is bad, but not as bad as it seems at first glance.

A series of articles comparing nylon, terylene, with p.v.c., acrylics, modacrylic and "blends" as fabrics for protective clothing were published in "Industrial Safety" July-Oct. 1977 written by N.T. Freeman. The February issue of the same year contains other articles on the importance of cloth construction and the general use of protective clothing. Freeman's articles compare durability of fabrics, ease of laundering and resistance to heat and flame. They are not highly "technical" articles but quite useful.

More specialized articles on whether protective clothing works appear from time to time in overseas journals. An article of this sort is "Protective Clothing as a Means of Reducing Nicotine Absorption in Tobacco Harvesters" by J.I. Freeman, S.H. Gehlbach, and W.A. Williams in Archives of Environmental Health Vol. 34(2) March/April 1979, p. 111.

Recently there was published an Australian Standard on "Clothing for Protection against Exposure to Highly Concentrated Chemicals for Short Periods". This was based largely on ISO/DIS 6529 and 6530 and little work of this type has been done in Australia.

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