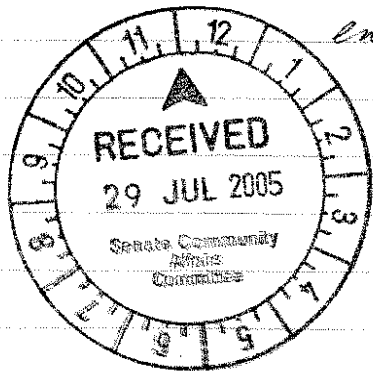


Submission to the Inquiry into workplace
exposure to toxic dust



26.7.2005

SUMMARY OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SUBMISSION.

- (A) Exposure could mean long and short term chronic health problems well into the future
- (B) At the time of my exposure there were no regulations or techniques available that I was informed about.
- (C) No information was supplied
- (D) My G.P. and the nurse attached to the surgery have tried in vain to find a medical diagnosis for me.
- (E) Hopefully full records would be kept at hospitals both public and private, regrettably in the past some patient records have been "lost"
- (F) Compensation should be automatic to those adversely affected. Others like myself, who, like myself have had long exposure should possibly be compensated to a lesser degree.
- (G) There is a big potential here for health problems, some particles are like radiation, they may be able to enter

the body through any exposed orifice or part of the body.

My SUBMISSION

From June 1972 to May 1976 I was employed by PIRKINGTON PLC in a variety of positions ranging from Quality Control to Machine Operator.

During this time there was a amount of exposure to what I believe to be asbestos. Generally this was used to build the forehearts of the glass drawing machines.

In the main however this mixture of asbestos and fibre glass was generally "wet" or "damp", although problems could have arisen later when it dried out and one's workclothes would be covered in a dry dust like substance.

From June 1976 to September 1992 I was employed by Crown CORNING a subsidiary Company of PLC (Austrian Consolidated Industries). Here I also fulfilled a number of positions ranging from Quality Control to Glass furnace melt operator and in this position of Melt Operator, I believe conditions existed that had the potential for health problems.

One of the functions of the Melt operator was the receiving of "Batch".

"Batch" is the name given to the Raw Materials used in the manufacture of glassware.

The 'Batch' contained many chemicals in the form

of very fine powder E.G. Arsenic and Silica -
As a necessity this Batch had to be very dry to
facilitate its elevation to the Batch Hoppers that
sat above the furnaces and batch feeder mechanisms.

The Batch was delivered by truck in 4-5 ton
lots and tipped into a well or holding hopper until
its elevation to the main hoppers.

This tipping produced clouds of dust and the
arrival of each load had to be supervised and checked
by the Melt Operator to ensure there was no
contamination, this at times meant physically handling
the Batch, we were also required to clean up the
Batch holding hopper and in the case of "overflows"
i.e. batch spilling onto the ground.

The Melt Operator was also required to physically
check the amount of Batch left in the main hoppers on
a daily basis. This meant opening a door in the
hopper and looking inside, also a situation that placed
one in a dusty dry environment.

This aspect of our employment had the potential
to be very dangerous.

At the suggestion of one of our occupational Nurses
we had our urine checked for Arsenic contamination, one
of our number was well above W.H.O. standards, others
who were checked also showed varying degrees of arsenic
in the blood.

During the time of my employment to the
best of my knowledge there were no regulations covering

exposure to dust.

Once again to the best of my knowledge and recollection we were never informed of the potential dangers of dust inhalation.

There was some minor alarm over the amount of arsenic we were exposed to and I believe its use was curtailed, albeit too late.

After reading the articles in the national press and noticing the occupations and Companies involved I asked my G.P. and his Nurse to check around and see where I could be tested for exposure to toxic dust at this point of time neither have had any success with the Pathology Labs available to them.

Under current Privacy laws all records should be available to those who have been exposed to this problem on request.

Compensation should be automatically available to those who have been adversely affected by toxic dust exposure without going through the legal system, also their medical bills etc should be met without hesitation.

For those like myself who have had moderate to high exposure over a number of years (12 in my case) Compensation could also be offered without recourse to the legal system, as a person who is on the age pension and before that a disability support Pension, I do not have the means to hire lawyers etc. to fight a court case unless perhaps such a case was put forward as a "class action".

There is always a danger of dust, fumes, manoparticles to enter the blood stream and damage ones health.

Once in I dont think they can be "removed" and will be there in the person until death.

Hopefully science will solve this problem and keep pace with emerging technologies.

Certainly better monitoring and workplace practices will eliminate this problem in the future

Since my retirement from the workplace I have not kept a lot of contact with my workmates who were employed in the same area, although I have reason to believe a number have passed away.

Currently my health appears to be "good" although I have a continual clearing of the throat and have bouts of pneumonia on a couple of occasions.

Yours Sincerely
John Haver

