

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-3918-5]

Ambient Air Monitoring Reference and Equivalent Methods; Receipt of Application for a Reference Method Determination

Notice is hereby given that on March 7, 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency received an application from Advanced Pollution Instrumentation Inc., 8815 Production Avenue, San Diego, California 92121-2219, to determine if their Model 200 Chemiluminescent NO_x Analyzer should be designated by the Administrator of the EPA as a reference method under 40 CFR part 53. If, after appropriate technical study, the Administrator determines that this method should be so designated, notice thereof will be given in a subsequent issue of the *Federal Register*.

John H. Skinner,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Research and Development.

[FR Doc. 91-7683 Filed 4-1-91; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5560-50-M

[OPTS-62104; FRL-3884-7]

Asbestos; Advisory to the Public

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of advisory to the public.

SUMMARY: This notice contains an advisory to the public that summarizes the potential health risks of asbestos exposure and EPA's policies for asbestos control in schools and other buildings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael M. Stahl, Director, Environmental Assistance Division (TS-799), Office of Toxic Substances, Environmental Protection Agency, Rm. E-545, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460, (202) 554-1404, TDD: (202) 554-0551.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

On November 28, 1990, the President signed into law the Asbestos School Hazard Abatement Reauthorization Act, Public Law 101-637. Section 13 of the Act requires the EPA Administrator, no later than 30 days after enactment, to "publish and distribute to all local education agencies and State Governors information or an advisory to: (A) facilitate public understanding of the comparative risks associated with in-place management of asbestos-containing building materials and removals; (B) promote the least

burdensome response actions necessary to protect human health, safety, and the environment; and (C) describe the circumstances in which asbestos removal is necessary to protect human health."

To implement section 13 of the Act discussed above, the Administrator signed on March 6, 1991, an advisory to the public on asbestos in buildings. This advisory was mailed to all local education agencies and State Governors.

II. The Advisory

The advisory is reproduced below in its entirety.

An Advisory to the Public on Asbestos in Buildings:

The Facts About Asbestos in Buildings

In recent months, there have been a number of scientific and news reports about asbestos in buildings. Unfortunately, some of these may have confused, rather than enlightened, the public about the potential health risks of asbestos exposure and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) policies regarding asbestos in schools and other buildings.

I want to summarize the EPA's policies for asbestos control in schools and other buildings. I am providing this summary in the form of five major facts that the Agency has presented in congressional testimony.

Fact one: Although asbestos is hazardous, human risk of asbestos disease depends upon exposure.

Asbestos is known to cause cancer and other diseases if asbestos fibers are inhaled into the lung and remain there. This conclusion is based upon studies involving human exposure, particularly exposure at high levels. A recent *Science* magazine article indicated exposure to chrysotile (common "white" asbestos) may be less likely to cause some asbestos-related diseases. Although there is more evidence of hazard for some types of asbestos, EPA believes there is reason to be concerned about other types, such as chrysotile, for which the data are less conclusive. Based on careful evaluation of available scientific evidence, EPA has adopted a prudent approach in its regulations of assuming that all fibers are of equal concern. Various scientific and regulatory organizations, including the National Academy of Sciences, support EPA's more protective regulatory approach.

It is important to stress that the mere presence of a hazardous substance, such as asbestos on an auditorium ceiling, no more implies that an asbestos-related

disease will develop than a poisonous substance in a medicine cabinet or under a kitchen sink implies that a poisoning will occur. Asbestos fibers must be released from the material in which they are contained, and an individual must breathe those fibers in order to incur any chance of disease.

While scientists have been unable to agree on a level of asbestos exposure at which we, as public policy makers, can confidently say, "there is no risk," this does not mean that all or any exposure is inherently dangerous. To the contrary, almost every day we are exposed to some level of asbestos fibers in buildings or in the outdoor air. Based upon available data, very few among us, given existing regulatory controls, have contracted or will ever contract an asbestos-related disease from these relatively low levels of airborne fibers found in buildings. The present scientific evidence will not allow us to state unequivocally that there is a level of exposure below which there is a zero risk, but the risk at these low levels in fact could be negligible or even zero. The risks of asbestos disease can be higher from exposures that occur during mining, manufacturing, and use of some remaining asbestos products, for example, in the repair of automotive brakes.

Fact two: Prevailing asbestos levels in buildings--the levels that school children and you and I face as building occupants--seem to be very low, based upon available data. Accordingly, the health risk we face as building occupants also appears to be very low.

Indeed, a 1987 EPA study found that airborne fiber levels in a segment of Federal buildings with asbestos management programs were so low that the levels were in a range comparable to levels outside these buildings. While the data are not conclusive and we are seeking more information through a major research effort, the 1987 study appears to suggest that building occupants face only a minimal risk when their buildings have active asbestos management programs. Severe health problems attributed to asbestos exposure have generally been experienced by workers in industries such as shipbuilding, where they were constantly exposed to very high fiber levels in the air, often without any of the worker protections now afforded to them under the law. Of course, some building workers, if they are not properly trained and protected, may disturb asbestos-containing materials and, in so doing, increase the risk to themselves and others.

Fact three: Removal is often *not* a school district's or other building owner's best course of action to reduce asbestos exposure. In fact, an improper removal can create a dangerous situation where none previously existed.

It is important to understand that, for most situations, EPA's asbestos regulations for schools under the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) do *not* require removal of asbestos. These regulations allow the school to decide whether asbestos removal, or some other response action, is the best option to protect the health of school students and employees. In general, asbestos removal is most appropriate when asbestos materials, such as pipe or boiler insulation, are damaged beyond repair.

Although we believe most asbestos removals are being conducted properly, asbestos removal practices by their very nature disturb the material and significantly elevate airborne fiber levels. Unless all safeguards are properly applied and strictly followed, exposure in the building can rise, perhaps to levels where we know disease can occur. Consequently, an ill-conceived or poorly conducted removal project can actually *increase* rather than eliminate risk.

Fact four: EPA only requires asbestos removal in order to prevent significant public exposure to asbestos, such as during building renovation or demolition.

Prior to a major renovation or demolition, asbestos material that is likely to be disturbed or damaged to the extent that significant amounts of asbestos would be released must be removed using approved practices under EPA's asbestos National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) regulation. Demolishing a building containing large amounts of asbestos, for example, would likely result in significantly increased exposure and could create an imminent hazard. Clearly, asbestos removal before the wrecking ball swings into action is appropriate to protect public health. However, this cannot be said of arbitrary asbestos removal projects, which, as noted above, can actually increase health risk unless properly performed. This, in part, is why EPA has *not* mandated asbestos removal from schools or other buildings beyond the NESHAP requirement, which has the effect of gradually and rationally taking all remaining asbestos building materials out of the inventory.

Fact five: EPA *does* recommend in-place management whenever asbestos is discovered.

Instead of removal, a conscientious in-place management program will usually control fiber releases, particularly when the materials are not significantly damaged and are not likely to be disturbed. That is why Congress mandated such a program in schools through AHERA.

In-place management, of course, does *not* mean "do nothing." It means, first, that the building owner or manager should *identify asbestos*, through a building-wide inventory or on a case-by-case basis before suspect materials are disturbed by renovations or other actions. The AHERA program requires an inventory of all asbestos materials in schools by properly accredited individuals.

After the material is identified, the school's personnel, building owner or manager can then *institute controls* to ensure that the day-to-day management of the building is carried out in a manner that prevents or minimizes the release of asbestos fibers into the air. These controls will ensure that when asbestos fibers are released, either accidentally or intentionally, proper management and cleanup procedures are implemented.

Another concern of EPA and other Federal, State and local agencies which regulate asbestos is to ensure proper worker training and protection. Maintenance and service workers in buildings, in the course of their daily activities, may disturb materials and can thereby elevate asbestos fiber levels, especially for themselves, if they are not properly trained and protected. For these persons, risk may be significantly higher than for other building occupants. Proper worker training and protection, as part of an active in-place management program, can reduce any unnecessary asbestos exposure for these workers and others. AHERA requires this training for school employees whose job activities may result in asbestos disturbances.

In addition to the steps outlined above, an in-place management program will usually include *notification* to workers and occupants of the existence of asbestos in their building, periodic *surveillance* of the material, and proper *recordkeeping*. EPA requires all of these activities for schools and strongly recommends that other building owners also establish comprehensive asbestos management programs. Without such programs, asbestos materials could be damaged or deteriorate, which may result in elevated levels of airborne asbestos fibers.

While the management costs of all the above activities will depend upon the amount, condition, and location of the

materials, such a program need not be expensive. In many instances, an in-place management program may be all that is necessary to control the release of asbestos fibers, until the asbestos-containing material in a building is scheduled for removal because of renovation or demolition activities.

In summary, EPA's best advice on asbestos is neither to rip it all out in a panic nor to ignore the problem under the false presumption that asbestos is "risk free." Rather, we recommend a practical approach that protects public health by emphasizing that asbestos material in buildings should be located, that it should be appropriately managed, and that those workers who may disturb it should be properly trained and protected. That has been, and continues to be, EPA's position.

If you have questions or need additional information about asbestos in schools and other buildings, please call EPA's Toxics Hotline at (202) 554-1404 or write the Environmental Assistance Division (TS-799), Office of Pesticides and Toxics Substances, 401 M Street, Washington, DC 20460.

Sincerely,
William K. Reilly.

Dated: March 26, 1991.

Mark A. Greenwood,
Director, Office of Toxic Substances.
[FR Doc. 91-7686 Filed 4-1-91; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-F

[OPTS-62095; FRL 3771-6]

Polychlorinated Biphenyls in Natural Gas Pipelines; Availability of Draft Guidance

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of availability of draft guidance.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of draft technical guidance documents for comment. One document addresses the issue of abandonment-in-place of natural gas transmission pipeline which previously has been contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The second document addresses the storage of natural gas pipeline that has been removed from the ground, for which there had been no PCB disposal approval specifying removal and storage requirements. The Agency has developed this document to provide the interstate natural gas transmission companies specific information on how to classify for disposal, sections of natural gas pipeline

that are in storage and that they wish to abandon in place or that are in storage and that may have been exposed to PCBs prior to being placed into storage.

DATES: Written comment on the Technical Guidance documents must be submitted on or before July 1, 1991.

ADDRESSES: Three copies of comments identified with the document control number (OPTS 62095) must be submitted to: TSCA Public Docket Office (TS-793), Office of Toxic Substances, rm. NE-G004, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington DC 20460. A public record has been established and is available in the TSCA Public Docket Office at the above address from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael M. Stahl, Director, Environmental Assistance Division (TS-799), Office of Toxic Substances, rm. E-543B, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460, (202) 554-1404, TDD (202) 554-0551, FAX (202) 554-5603 (document requests only).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under a 1987 memorandum of understanding with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), EPA reviews all applications by interstate natural gas companies to remove or abandon in place portions of their systems which have been contaminated with PCBs at 50 ppm or greater. The purpose of this review is to determine whether or not the removal or abandonment project is in compliance with TSCA PCB regulations at 40 CFR part 761. This guidance does not relate to a company's compliance with any other Federal, State or local law. Natural gas pipeline which has been exposed to PCBs is a PCB Article under 40 CFR 761.3. In 1981, EPA had determined through its inspections that 13 of the 24 interstate natural gas transmission companies had PCBs in their system at concentrations of 50 ppm or greater. Because PCBs are mobile within these systems, the precise location of the contamination within the system is not known without sufficient sampling. The purpose of completing these technical guidance documents is to provide information to the interstate natural gas transmission companies in (1) characterizing their systems in terms of the PCB levels that are present at those portions of the system which they wish to abandon in place (see the document entitled "Technical Guidance for the Abandonment in Place of Interstate Natural Gas Pipeline Systems"), and (2) determining whether pipe that has been removed and stored for disposal has been contaminated with PCBs (see the document entitled

"Guidance on Classification for Purposes of Disposal of Stored Natural Gas Pipe Which Was Not Part of a Pipe Removal Project Carried Out Under An EPA-Approved PCB Disposal Activity"). Copies of the technical guidance may be obtained from the Agency at the address listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

Dated: March 26, 1991.

Elizabeth F. Bryan,
Acting Director, Exposure Evaluation
Division, Office of Toxic Substances.

[FR Doc. 91-7687 Filed 4-1-91; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-F

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

[FEMA-897-DR]

Georgia: Amendment to Notice of Major Disaster Declaration

AGENCY: Federal Emergency
Management Agency.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice amends the notice of a major disaster for the State of Georgia (FEMA-897-DR), dated March 15, 1991, and related determinations.

DATED: March 21, 1991.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neva K. Elliott, Disaster Assistance Programs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, DC 20472 (202) 646-3614.

Notice

The notice of a major disaster for the State of Georgia, dated March 15, 1991, is hereby amended to include the following areas among those areas determined to have been adversely affected by the catastrophe declared a major disaster by the President in his declaration of March 15, 1991:

The counties of Clinch, Jeff Davis, and Ware for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance.

Notice is hereby given that the incident period for this disaster is closed effective March 21, 1991.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No. 83.516, Disaster Assistance.)

Grant C. Peterson,
Associate Director, State and Local Programs
and Support, Federal Emergency
Management Agency.

[FR Doc. 91-7689 Filed 4-1-91; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6718-02-M

[FEMA-895-DR]

Mississippi; Amendment to Notice of Major Disaster Declaration

AGENCY: Federal Emergency
Management Agency.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice amends the notice of a major disaster for the State of Mississippi (FEMA-895-DR), dated March 5, 1991, and related determinations.

DATED: March 21, 1991.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neva K. Elliott, Disaster Assistance Programs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, DC 20472 (202) 646-3614.

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that the incident period for this disaster is closed effective March 21, 1991.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No. 83.516, Disaster Assistance.)

Grant C. Peterson,
Associate Director, State and Local Programs
and Support, Federal Emergency
Management Agency.

[FR Doc. 91-7690 Filed 4-1-91; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6718-02-M

[FEMA-898-DR]

New York; Major Disaster and Related Determinations

AGENCY: Federal Emergency
Management Agency.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This is a notice of the Presidential declaration of a major disaster for the State of New York (FEMA-898-DR), dated March 21, 1991, and related determinations.

DATES: March 21, 1991.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neva K. Elliot, Disaster Assistance Programs, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Washington, DC 20472 (202) 646-3614.

Notice

Notice is hereby given that, in a letter dated March 21, 1991, the President declared a major disaster under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 *et seq.*, Pub. L. 93-288, as amended by Pub. L. 100-707), as follows:

I have determined that the damage in certain areas of the State of New York, resulting from a severe winter storm on