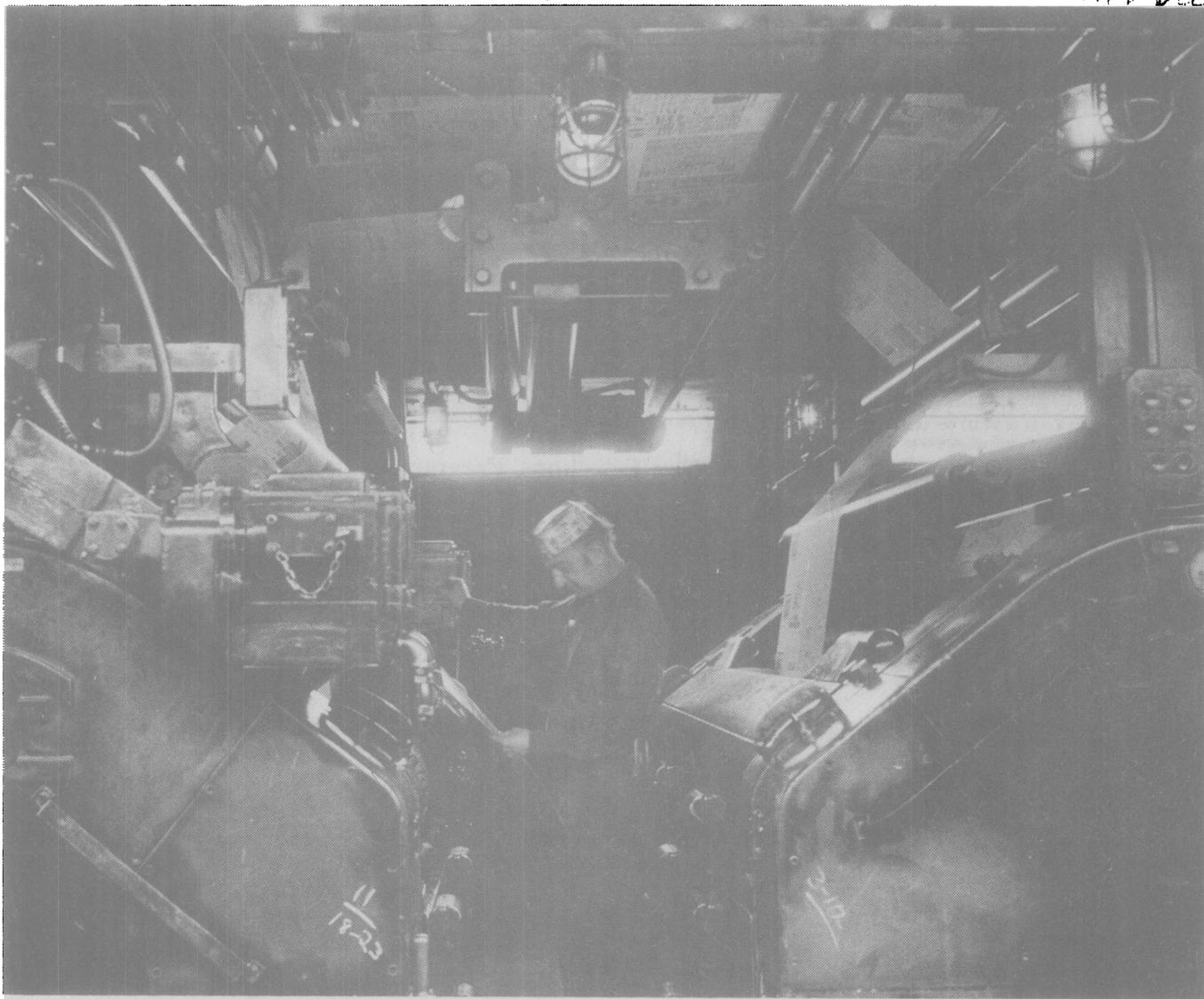


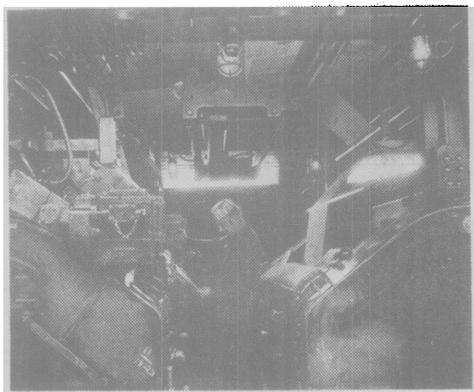
# Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

*Call F. U. ... CE ... Program  
M. A. ...*



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**WEB PRESS OPERATORS:  
HAZARDS IN THE PRESSROOM**



**On the Cover:**

The occupation of web pressman is an old and honorable one. Equipment and hazards have not changed significantly in 50 years, but new techniques for controlling noise, paper dust, and ink mist look promising. (See pages 7-9.) (Photo: Ken Light.)

# Labor Occupational Health Program MONITOR

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—Fred Wright, UE News

# Fix the Workplace, Not the Worker

by Eula Bingham

*Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health*

Workplace design is the key to eliminating job safety and health hazards.

That is why the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to try to reduce hazards by changing the work environment or work practices, rather than by permanently burdening workers with respirators, ear plugs, or other personal protective equipment.

Personal protective equipment is often needed while other controls are being installed, or in emergencies. But there are several reasons why it generally is not the best permanent solution.

*First, personal protective equipment doesn't always work.* For example, the difficulty of fitting standardized masks on faces of all shapes and sizes—some with eyeglasses, some with beards, some with sideburns—means there are bound to be leaks.

*Second, personal protective equipment can create its own health and safety hazards.* Ear plugs, for instance, can cause infections and outer ear canal problems for some workers. In some cases, they may also prevent workers from hearing necessary communications and warnings.

Goggles can sometimes become scratched and fog up during use, reducing visibility. Rubber gloves can collect chemicals and trap them against the skin. A dust-clogged respirator may make breathing difficult, especially if strenuous work must be performed.

*Third, personal protective equipment is often uncomfortable.* For short periods of time, this discomfort may be bearable. Over extended periods, it usually isn't, and may lead to lowered productivity.

Fortunately, most hazards can be controlled without using personal protective equipment. This may be done in a number of ways:

- **Changes in work processes.** Dangerous materials often can be replaced. It may be possible to accomplish a task with a process which produces lower levels of noise, dust, or fumes.

- **Isolation and enclosure.** Closed systems can be designed so that hazardous dusts or fumes are drawn away without ever entering the workplace air.

- **Maintenance and housekeeping.** Hazards may often be reduced simply by devoting more time to maintaining equipment and keeping the workplace clean.

- **Work practices.** Rotation of workers in and out of the most dangerous jobs, while it doesn't eliminate the

hazard, will limit the exposure of any one worker until a permanent engineering solution is found.

If you have ideas for workplace changes which would help your employer meet OSHA standards, you or your union should bring them to your employer's attention. Your employer can get free advice on correcting hazards through OSHA's "consultation services" program.

If you need help from OSHA, look in your phone book under "United States Government, Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration," or write to OSHA, 3rd and Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

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## Children Exposed Labor Dept. Sued Over Pesticide Regulations

The Public Citizen Health Research Group filed suit against the U.S. Dept. of Labor on April 12 to overturn regulations which permit children to harvest crops sprayed with pesticides.

The DOL's Employment Standards Administration issued regulations last year which permit waivers of child labor laws for 10- and 11-year-old children to work at hand harvesting of short-season crops such as strawberries and potatoes.

Health Research Group, which earlier had requested both DOL and President Carter to rescind the regulations, filed suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of the National Association of Farmworker Organizations and Northwest Rural Opportunities. HRG sought a court order "declaring unlawful and enjoining the effect of" the regulations.

The government has estimated that 90% of all workers employed in the 1978 strawberry harvest were under the age of 16. HRG cited a study conducted

at Johns Hopkins School for Hygiene and Public Health which revealed "a marked tendency for more children with brain tumors to have had exposures to insecticides when compared with normal children" as evidence of the seriousness of the problem. HRG also pointed out that the Environmental Protection Agency has warned that 10- and 11-year-olds are "likely to be more susceptible to toxic effects of pesticides than adults."

A list of 22 pesticides considered safe for child workers was originally issued by the Employment Standards Administration, but three carcinogenic pesticides were later removed from it. HRG charged that the removal was "too little, too late" and that the agency should also be concerned with pesticides which cause genetic mutation, birth defects, growth depression, and damage to bodily systems.

—BNA Occupational Safety and Health Reporter

# Death Train by Janet Bertinuson

*Hazards of carbon monoxide are illustrated by a strange story from World War II Italy. Although there was no wreck and no car left the rails, 521 were killed in a late-night, winter railroad disaster.*

Thirty-four years ago along a stretch of railroad in southern Italy, an unusual train accident occurred. Although 521 persons were killed, there was no wreck involved. The accident occurred during a routine run of train 8017 from Naples to Bari, a seaport town on Italy's east coast. The trip through a mountainous area was normally slow and ponderous, and on this sleety, cold March night conditions were worse than normal because of the ice-coated rails.

Because the accident occurred during wartime when strict censorship of all news was the norm, very little information about the disaster was released until recently.

Shortly after midnight, train 8017 pulled into Balvano-Ricigliano station, where for 38 minutes two nightmen went through their normal routine of checking the 47 coaches and two locomotives. Just before one a.m. the train left on its way to Bella-Muro, less than four miles away.

On this particular night, the normally crowded train was even more jammed. As usual it carried a load of professional black marketeers on their way to Lucania to fill their cases with items such as meat, tobacco, and vegetables for resale in Naples. But a group of medical students were returning to Bari from Naples, and their weight took the tonnage over the maximum that the two locomotives were supposed to carry. The ice-coated rails and extra tonnage both played leading parts in the strange disaster.

Approximately two hours after the train left Balvano, assistant stationmaster Salonia contacted Bella-Muro to make sure train 8017 had left that station, thus clearing the tracks for an approaching train. The telegraph gave him his answer—train 8017 was almost two hours late. When the next train reached Balvano, Salonia detached a locomotive to check out the track. Just as Salonia was starting the locomotive he was faced by a sobbing Michele Palo (brakeman from 8017), who stood



at the entrance to Balvano tunnel screaming "Sono tutti morti." ("They are all dead".)

## ALL DEAD

After calming Palo, Salonia took the locomotive up the track to the stalled train. What he found was an eerie silence and many passengers sprawled in what looked like the postures of sleep. But they were not sleeping—all were dead. Making his way up to the engines Salonia was met with the same sight. It appeared that no one, including the engineers, had escaped death.

Following the accident, Italian police reconstructed what they thought had happened. The extra weight and icy condition of the rails made it necessary for extra coal to be fed into the fire box to provide power for pulling the train up a hillside through the Galleria delle Armi tunnel. Once inside the tunnel more coal was shoveled in as the train began to slip backwards. No headway was made, and all cars except the caboose (which was occupied by brakeman Palo) remained stuck in the tunnel.

As the roaring fire in the engines was fed, no one was aware that smoke was not the only material being produced. A deadly pall of carbon monoxide gas quickly spread over the entire train, and the tunnel walls concentrated it so that in probably less than five minutes almost everyone was dead. Carbon

monoxide was especially severe due to the low grade of the inferior wartime coal. Palo escaped because of his position in the caboose, and five other passengers did not suffocate, although three of them bolted before they could tell why they had survived.

One passenger, however, did tell his story. At the Balvano station, Domenico Miele had stepped outside to stretch and get some air. Because of the cold, he covered both his nose and mouth with a scarf. He was one of the few passengers who didn't fall asleep, so when the smoke in the tunnel reached him (he couldn't smell carbon monoxide) he started coughing, wrapped the scarf tighter, and moved toward the tunnel. The scarf acted as a crude respirator to lower his exposure to carbon monoxide.

The other survivor, a vendor, was so affected by the gas that today he is still unable to remember anything useful about the accident. His brain was probably starved for oxygen, even though he survived.

Because of its lack of taste, odor, or color, no one on train 8017 was warned of carbon monoxide exposure. Although the magnitude of this disaster is overwhelming, people continue to die every year because they fail to make—and are not informed of—the connection between burning of fuel, particularly in enclosed spaces, and production of excessive carbon monoxide.

# Carbon Monoxide A FACT SHEET

By Janet Bertinuson

Carbon monoxide (CO) is one of the most widespread job-related hazards. The environment outside workplaces is also contaminated, and we are all exposed to some carbon monoxide from automobiles and industrial processes. Many workers die every year from exposure; in fact, CO causes more deaths than any other toxic agent except alcohol. Others suffer serious effects, both long and short-term. Because it is odorless, colorless, and tasteless, carbon monoxide gives no warning of its presence, and is therefore especially dangerous. The main source of carbon monoxide is the incomplete burning of any material that contains carbon, such as gas, oil, coal, or wood.

## WHERE DOES CARBON MONOXIDE COME FROM?

Ovens, kilns, and furnaces in foundries, steel mills, pulp mills, and lime plants release large amounts of carbon monoxide. Vehicles such as autos, buses, trucks, and fork lifts also produce this gas, exposing toll booth collectors, bus and truck drivers, operators of industrial trucks, mine and tunnel workers, longshoremen and other dock workers. Interior heaters which have not been cleaned or adjusted are another source of CO. Other sources of exposure are arc welding, catalytic cracking units in petroleum refineries, and fires in general.

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE?

The basic effect of carbon monoxide exposure is to rob your blood, and therefore the rest of your body, of oxygen. When the gas is inhaled it combines with hemoglobin, the oxygen carrier in the blood. Even when there is plenty of oxygen in the air, the hemoglobin combines much more easily with carbon monoxide. It acts as though it has a preference for carbon monoxide over oxygen.

When you don't get enough oxygen,

all parts of your body suffer, particularly the brain and heart.

The brain is the first to be affected by CO poisoning, leading to common symptoms of headache, dizziness, and mental confusion. This is your first clue of exposure and should be taken as a warning to get out! If exposure continues, you will become uncoordinated, weak, and may feel nauseous. The final effects of excessive exposure are convulsions, coma, and death.

Long-term exposure to low levels of carbon monoxide is not as well studied. Fatigue and a continuing loss of coordination are clues that you are slowly being poisoned. Other effects, according to some workers, are impaired vision, loss of appetite, slowed reaction time, and nervous disorders. The contribution of long-term carbon monoxide exposure to heart problems has not been well studied. However, studies of tunnel workers have shown a higher than normal rate of heart attacks.

For the pregnant worker, exposure to carbon monoxide can be particularly dangerous. Animal studies have shown that the gas is harmful to the developing fetus, but no studies show a clear link between birth defects in humans and low-level CO exposure. However, there are reports of acute poisoning cases where the babies of the exposed mothers had nervous system defects or were still-born. The lower weight of babies born to mothers who smoke has been linked by some researchers to the carbon monoxide which is a byproduct of cigarette smoking.

## IS THERE AN EXPOSURE STANDARD?

The current OSHA standard allows for an eight-hour average exposure of 50 parts per million, while NIOSH, the research arm of OSHA, recommends a level of 35 ppm. Standards are proposed for healthy young males, and don't take into account already existing health problems or the strain which working puts on the body. When performing a strenuous task, a worker breathes faster

and therefore takes in higher levels of CO. If you are working harder, you need more oxygen, but in such cases you are getting more carbon monoxide instead.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT EXPOSURES ARE?

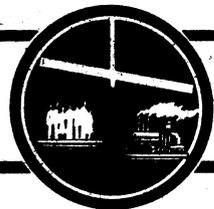
Monitoring the air for carbon monoxide is absolutely necessary wherever there is a possibility of exposure, particularly since your senses give you no clue that you are exposed. There are a number of CO monitors available, such as:

- *Universal Detector:* a hand-operated pump and tubes that change color according to the concentration of CO. This set-up is good for spot readings, but is not very accurate;
- *CO Indicator:* A portable instrument which indicates CO levels on a meter;
- *Continuous Monitor:* Kept in a fixed location, this instrument monitors CO levels continuously. It can be set to sound an alarm when levels of CO are above the PEL (permissible exposure limit).

## HOW ARE CO LEVELS CONTROLLED?

Ventilation systems are the best method for removing CO from the work environment. Local exhaust systems over a welding operation or blowers in the hold of a ship are two examples of such systems. Substitution is also an effective control. For example, battery-powered or propane-powered fork lifts can be substituted for gasoline fork lifts. And routine maintenance of engines can help keep CO levels at a minimum.

Emergency equipment including respirators and oxygen should be available wherever CO is likely to be produced. Workers trained in first aid and an evacuation plan are also part of emergency preparations.



Monitor will be running a series of regular reports on the activities of various health and safety projects in the West which have received funding from the OSHA 'New Directions' program. The program, established in 1978, provides funding to unions, universities, public interest and management groups.

## International Longshoremens' and Warehousemen's Union

One of the West Coast unions to be awarded a one-year planning grant under OSHA's 'New Directions' program is the ILWU. The union has employed Russ Bargmann, formerly a safety and health expert with the International Painters and Allied Trades, to direct the project, and has retained a medical consultant.

The ILWU's Convention, held every two years, took place in San Diego from April 23-27, 1979. For the first time, a Convention Committee on health and safety was established. Composed of some 60 delegates, the Committee

met for two days to consider health and safety problems facing the membership, who work in a wide variety of industries, such as agriculture, food and beverage processing, pharmaceutical manufacturing, warehousing, grain and rice milling, as well as longshoring.

Janet Bertinuson, Industrial Hygienist on the staff of the Labor Occupational Health Program, gave a presentation on how to recognize health hazards and make workplace surveys. Along with Bargmann and others, she then helped to answer a number of questions related to specific problems raised by Committee members.

## Public Media Center

Public Media Center in San Francisco (PMC) is a nonprofit, public interest organization devoted to assisting community groups, labor unions, consumer groups, and government agencies in publicizing their goals and activities.

The Occupational Health and Safety Project of PMC is funded by a planning grant from OSHA's New Directions program. The OHS Project is developing plans to reach employees in the culinary, garment, and printing industries with information about occupational health and safety. To accomplish this goal, the OHS Project is working with unions, health centers, vocational training programs, and the media.

Specific activities to be carried out by the OHS Project include:

- Development of materials on occupational health for use by employees, supervisors, teachers,

and health professionals, including information on hazard recognition in specific industries, legal information, and job hazard analysis;

- In-service training for health professionals on recognition of occupational disease, taking work histories, basic industrial hygiene;
- Technical assistance to organizations in developing materials and programs;

During the month of May, PMC will develop a publication on worker rights and occupational health hazards in the printing, garment, and culinary industries, as well as a guide to occupational health resources in California. For further information, contact Mary Haan Shinoff, 2751 Hyde St., San Francisco, CA 94109, or phone (415) 885-0200.

## UCLA

The Center for Labor Research and Education at UCLA held a day-long conference on occupational health and safety on May 4 in Los Angeles.

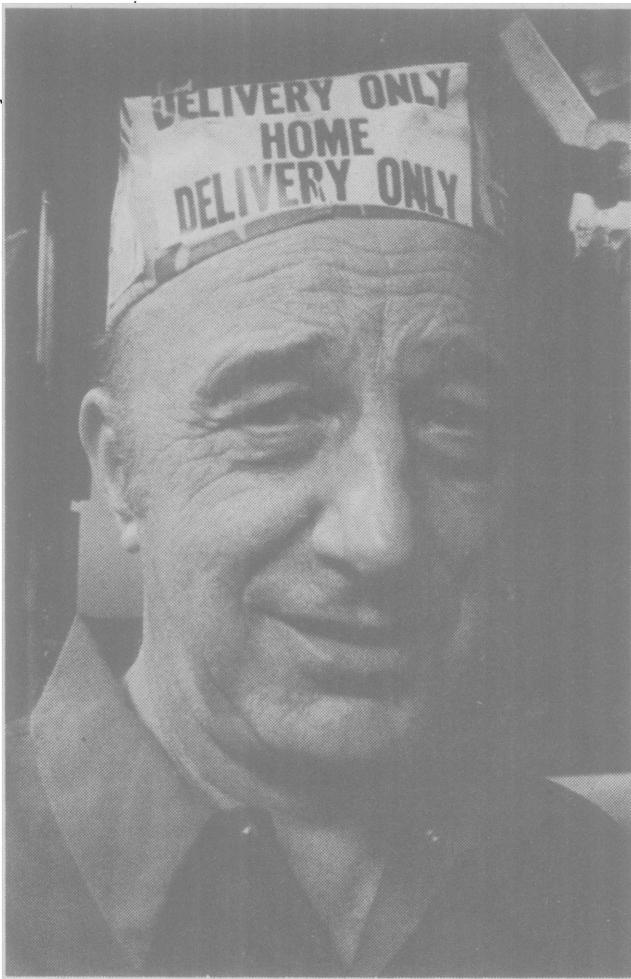
The conference, "A New Direction in Occupational Health," was attended by nearly 200 from labor, vocational education programs, school districts, and community groups. Students on both the high school and college level also participated.

Jack Blackburn, Chairman of the UCLA Center, opened the conference by describing the OSHA planning grant that UCLA has received, and explaining the goals for the first year of the newly-established health and safety component. He introduced Joyce Spencer, an occupational health nurse who is coordinating the program.

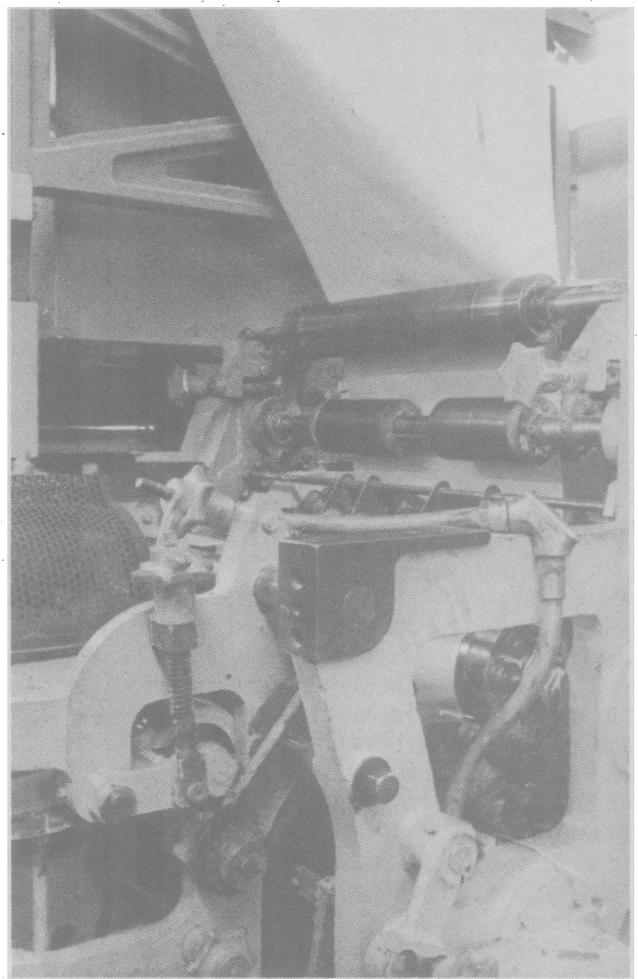
Other speakers included James Pierce from federal OSHA, who explained the current 'New Directions' program and discussed prospects for future funding, and Don Vial, Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations, who focused on California's involvement in occupational health and safety. Vial described the establishment of two Occupational Health Centers (one in Northern California and one in Southern California) under recently-enacted State legislation, and the State's plans to develop a Toxic Substances Identification and Alert System.

Dr. Jean Felton, an occupational health physician, and Janet Bertinuson, Industrial Hygienist at LOHP, focused their remarks on the scope of potential health hazards. Bertinuson discussed surveying the workplace and hazard recognition, and Dr. Felton described health effects of occupational hazards and stressed the importance of workers keeping work history diaries.

Jim Heacock, Industrial Hygienist for the State of California, talked about the role of the Industrial Hygienist. Final speaker for the day was Tony Mazzocchi, Vice President of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, who explored the area of collective bargaining for safety and health.



(Photo: Ken Light.)



(Photo: Ken Light.)

## *Web Press Operators*

# **Hazards in the Pressroom**

**By Paul Chown**

For some jobs in the newspaper industry, technological change has wiped out age-old health hazards such as exposure to lead. Process changes, however, have also created new areas of concern such as continuous work on video display terminals (VDT's).

But for the "web" press operator, production has remained virtually the same process for the last half century.

The term "web pressman" was coined to describe the method used by members of the trade to thread long rolls of paper in intricate patterns through a series of individual presses. The end product is a finished newspaper, with

many pages, printed on both sides and with the pages properly matched up after passing through a "folder" which assembles the paper and cuts it to size.

The profession of web pressman is an old and honorable one; the forebears of present generation workers go back to the earliest days of printing. In fact, shop stewards in the International Printing and Graphic Communications Union of North America are still called "Chapel Chairmen", and when meetings are held in a newspaper pressroom they are called "Chapel Meetings." The term harks back to the days when prayer meetings were held regularly.

In all, some 60,000 men (and a few women) work at the occupation of web pressman in the U.S. Web pressmen have been plagued by three severe health hazards during their entire history: paper dust, ink mists, and noise. Until the passage in 1970 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, not much was done to tackle the health hazards of pressmen in a systematic way. But in the last nine years, both the International Union and its local affiliates such as Web Pressmen and Platemakers'

*continued on p. 8*

## Web Press Operators

### Hazards in the Pressroom

continued from p. 7

Local 4 in San Francisco have been trying to turn things around and to establish better conditions on the job.

#### WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

Studies have shown that pressmen have higher rates of emphysema and related illnesses than the general population. It is well known that levels of ink mist exposure in pressrooms are high. This mist contains carbon black and mineral oils, which may contain trace amounts of carcinogenic substances, according to U.S. and British studies. These studies also suggest that there is increased risk of lung cancer for pressroom workers.

As far back as 1713, unusual lung disorders have been found to plague printers. A Swedish study in 1955 reported that, among printing workers exposed to ink, the rate of lung cancer was 54 times that of the general population. The Department of Occupational Health at Manchester University in England made a study which showed that printing trades workers had an excess of deaths from lung cancer of 32% in London and 41% in Manchester. In 1972, Dr. Ruben Merliss examined 100 pressmen from the Los Angeles Herald Examiner and found that 85% of them had some form of lung cancer, emphysema, bronchitis, pneumonia, or other lung injury.

Currently, numerous studies are underway to establish more conclusively the effect of exposure to ink and paper dust in the pressrooms of the United States.

#### NOISE

Excessive noise levels have always been present in newspaper pressrooms. The problem used to be considered only an annoyance or inconvenience, but we now know that exposure to too much noise is a serious hazard for exposed workers. In addition to causing

hearing damage, noise has been linked to certain stress-related diseases such as hypertension (high blood pressure). A number of experts think that noise can be the cause of various psychological problems as well. It is a form of pollution which has severely affected many workers because, until recently, its victims were not aware of, or were forced to overlook, the danger of exposure.

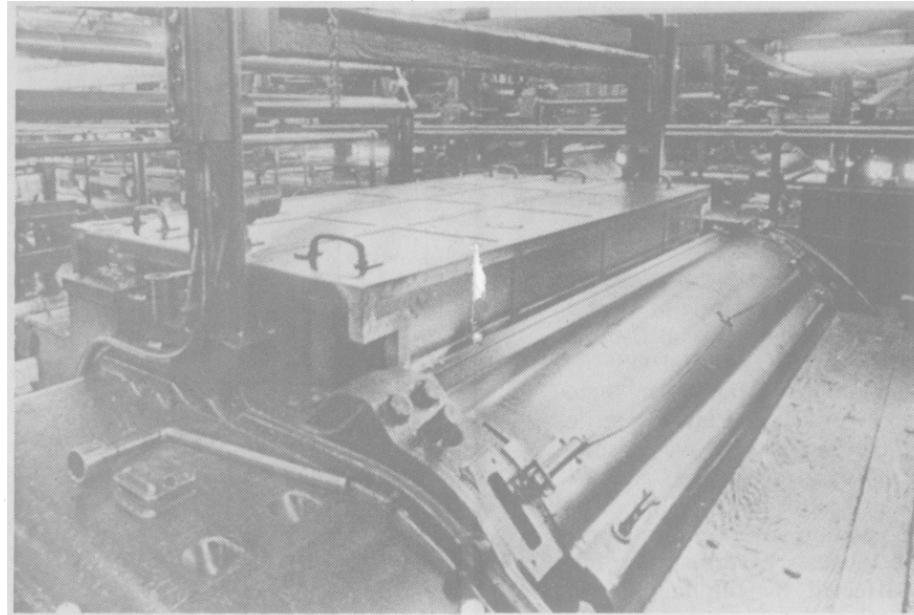
#### BAY AREA LOCAL

All over the country, pressmen are now making their health and safety a number one issue of concern. Nowhere is this more evident than in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Local 4 has become extremely active in promoting better working conditions.

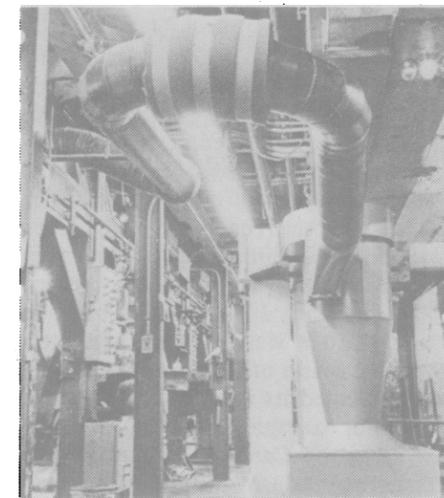
In the last agreement negotiated with the "Big Four" newspapers (the *Oakland Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *San Francisco Examiner*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*), a clause was inserted to provide for immediate arbitration of any issue affecting the health and safety of union members as a result of basic changes in the way in which presses are staffed.

Moreover, there has been a voluntary agreement on the part of some newspapers to install engineering controls to reduce paper dust in the air. A byproduct of these controls is a substantial reduction in noise levels—about a ten-fold reduction!

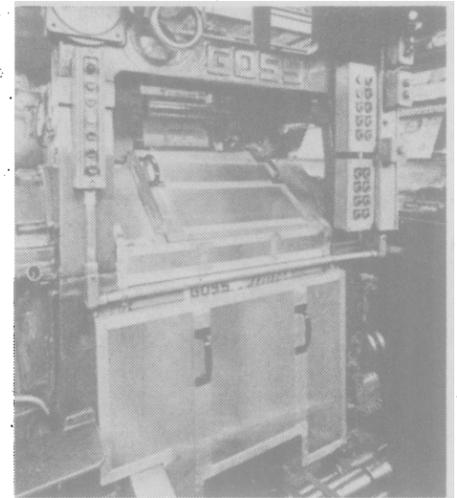
The most commonly used measurement of noise levels is the dBA (A-scale decibel.) Since sound levels vary over an extremely wide range, no simple scale can express all levels; hence a logarithmic scale is used. A change of only one decibel up or down represents a dramatic change in sound intensity or pressure. As an illustration, a shift from 60 to 70 dBA means that sound



—Color halfdeck roller enclosure.



—Welded pipeline to dust collector.



—Headliner folder enclosure.

pressure has increased ten times, not 15%. The reverse is likewise true. Around the presses, where modified enclosures have been installed, the resulting noise level drop of from 6 to 10 dBA is a very noticeable reduction.

The *San Jose Mercury News* has enclosed all its presses, as has the *Hayward Review*. The San Francisco Newspaper Printing Company, which prints both the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner*, has installed enclosures on two of its presses and is proceeding to enclose all the rest. The enclosures are actually quite inexpensive.

These enclosures, while they represent a substantial step forward, do not elim-

inate the problem of excessive noise and do not bring the noise levels down to the OSHA standard of 90 dBA, the union's target. Intensive engineering studies are going on in the industry in an effort to solve the noise problem for the least possible cost.

#### WORLDWIDE PROGRESS

Worldwide, there are three newspapers that have "completely solved" the noise, ink mist, and paper dust problems; one is in Sweden, another in Finland, and a third in France. Experimental models of their equipment are

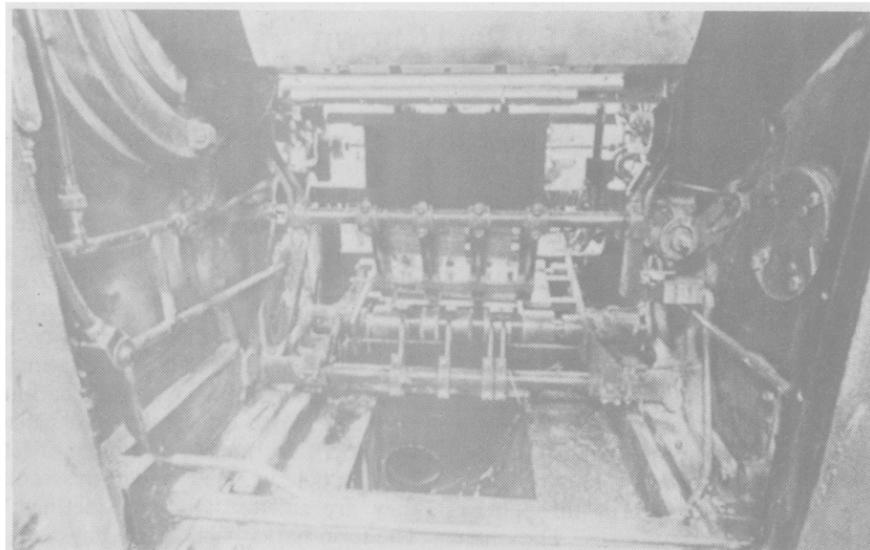
being developed for installation in American pressrooms. The big hang-up is reluctance of newspapers to make the initial capital investment involved in the installation of new equipment.

The problem was stated most succinctly in an article appearing in *Newspaper Production* (September, 1974) by Ole M. Pvergaard, President of Noise Abatement Systems. In describing the OSHA standards, Pvergaard says, "It is important to remember that a primary objective should be compliance with the law for as little capital outlay as possible. Very importantly, there does not seem to be any tangible return on investment in meeting requirements for quieter environmental working conditions."

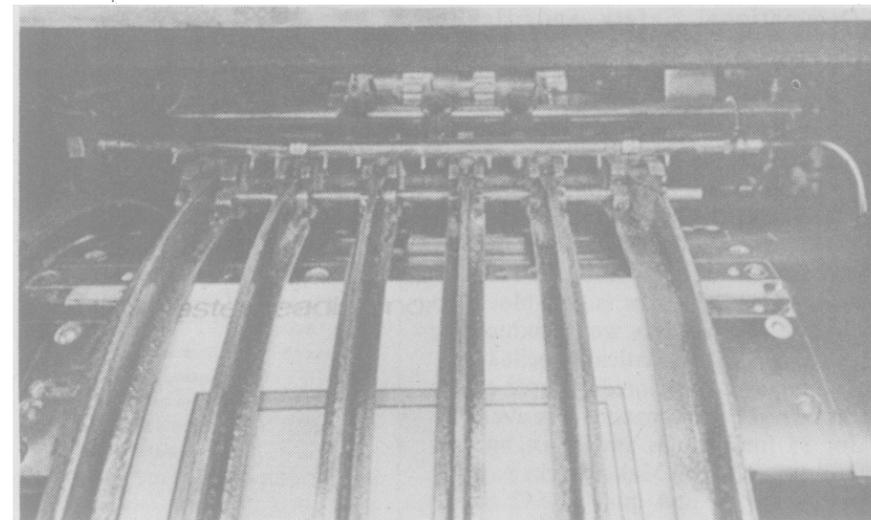
Because of this industry orientation against capital spending, two newspapers, the *Oakland Tribune* and the *San Jose Mercury News*, have been cited for noise violations and have received special orders from Cal/OSHA requiring medical surveillance and other special procedures for protecting the hearing of Local 4 members.

The *Oakland Tribune* is contesting the requirement for engineering controls and the matter is before the Appeals Board of Cal/OSHA.

So, despite some victories, the struggle goes on. Web Pressmen Local 4, together with other unions with related problems, continue their efforts to reduce noise levels.



—Back of folder showing noise abatement foam.



—Inside folder enclosure; air line prevents dust from collecting.

# Cal/OSHA and the Industrial Welfare Commission

by Bruce Poyer,  
U.C. Center for Labor Research  
and Education

In California, both the Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) and the Cal/OSHA program (within the Division of Occupational Safety and Health) have specific responsibilities for worker safety and health. Although employers sometimes claim that the jurisdictions of these two agencies overlap, actually they have developed a relationship which is quite simple and straightforward.

The basic authority and responsibility of the IWC is set forth in California Labor Code Sections 1173-1199. Aside from matters affecting wages and hours of work, the Commission can investigate and promulgate orders and regulations affecting "conditions of labor and employment . . . and . . . the comfort, health, safety, and welfare . . ." of men, women, and minors employed "in the various occupations, trades, and industries" in California. In the years since its creation in 1913, the Commission has developed a series of "orders" or minimum standards which now cover wages, hours, and working conditions in fifteen industry groups (including nearly all workers in the state.)

In 1973, the Labor Code was amended to require the IWC to review and hold hearings on all its existing rules, regulations, and policies. Then, with respect to health and safety, the following paragraph was added to Section 1173 of the Labor Code:

**"Before adopting any new rules, regulations, or policies, the commission shall consult with the Industrial Safety Board to determine those areas and subject matters where the respective jurisdictions of the commission and the Industrial Safety Board overlap. In the case of such overlapping jurisdiction, the Industrial Safety Board shall have exclusive jurisdiction, and rules, regulations, or policies of the commission on the same subject have no force or effect."**

(The Industrial Safety Board referred to in this clause is now the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in the State Department of Industrial Relations. It is referred to herein under the broader term, Cal/OSHA.)

Before the IWC's 1976 orders were established, the IWC commissioners met with Cal/OSHA and authorized appropriate staff people from both agencies to confer and decide how to handle all areas of possible overlap. Agreement between the two agencies resulted in the elimination of a number of provisions from the IWC orders established in 1976, either because those matters were already regulated by Cal/OSHA, or because Cal/OSHA had indicated its intention to regulate them. For example, in IWC Order 3-76 (covering the Canning, Freezing, and Preserving Industry), standards regulating the following subjects were dropped by IWC: protective garments, drinking water and washing facilities, toilet rooms, first aid, floors, cleanliness and upkeep, lighting, ventilation, and exits. Standards covering the following subjects were retained in IWC Order 3-76: change rooms and resting facilities, seats, temperature, elevators, and lifting.

Both the IWC and Cal/OSHA may set standards on such matters as elevators, without any overlapping. IWC could determine that elevators must be provided in certain working situations—which Cal/OSHA would not do—and Cal/OSHA could then specify

the safety regulations for operation of the elevators—which IWC would not do.

## INDUSTRY COMPLAINS

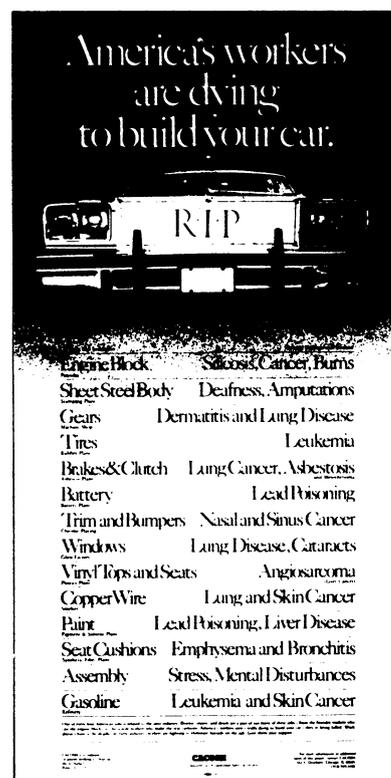
Because employer groups in California have traditionally challenged many practices of state regulatory agencies—especially those agencies established to protect the interests of workers—it is not surprising that these groups continue to argue that there is overlap between IWC and Cal/OSHA, which makes life difficult for some employers. However, the law is specific that Cal/OSHA has exclusive jurisdiction in any case of overlap, and the agencies themselves have had no difficulty in handling overlap situations. Workers' interests have not been adversely affected by the law or its administration.

The law also requires a further review of the overlap question every time new regulations are issued by IWC. Therefore, in connection with the 1979 reopening of all IWC orders, and prior to the public hearings by IWC on recommendations of its wage boards, there will be another meeting of IWC commissioners with appropriate officials of Cal/OSHA on July 26 to discuss any matters of jurisdictional overlap, or potential overlap, that may be raised.

## CACOSH Offers Auto Industry Poster

The Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (CACOSH) offers this 14" x 28" poster on health and safety hazards in the auto industry. The poster explains how America's workers aren't really dying to build your car—they're being killed. Nearly a fourth of all jobs in the U.S. are related to the auto industry. The unsafe and unhealthy conditions that these workers face—from the foundry workers who cast the engine blocks to the refinery workers who produce the gasoline—are dramatically spelled out.

The poster is printed in three colors on heavy, coated paper. It is available for \$5 (individuals and labor unions) and \$10 (others.) Make checks payable to CACOSH and mail to 542 South Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60605.





## BOOKS

**Blue Collar: An Internal Examination of the Workplace.** By Charles Spencer. Lakeside Charter Books, Chicago, 1977. Paperback; \$4.95.

Not to be confused with a recent movie of the same name, *Blue Collar—An Internal Examination of the Workplace* by Charles Spencer is an in-depth description and exploration of the working lives of steelworkers. Spencer establishes continuity in his writing by concentrating on one steel plant, the South Chicago works of the Republic Steel Corporation. He uses an historical approach—for example, describing the Memorial Day Massacre in 1937 when ten striking steelworkers were killed and one hundred others wounded, as well as an analytical one—he is critical of OSHA, capitalist politics, international union leaders, and management attitudes towards health and safety.

A quote from Spencer's chapter on a rare uncontested grievance is a good example of the attitude of this man who has spent 25 years as a worker and union activist in a steel mill himself: "But one can't resist the whimsical theory that if a fair and just jury award were made to all the millions of victims of occupational accidents and diseases, it would result in a more far-reaching distribution of the nation's wealth than ever dreamed by Utopians."

Susan Salisbury

**Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women's Work.** By Louise Kapp Howe. Avon Books, 1977. Paperback; \$2.25.

Another segment of the American working population that has been recognized and publicized even less than the blue collar worker is the nearly two-thirds of the female workforce that is employed in service occupations—"pink collar" workers. Louise Kapp Howe, in a very readable style, gives

these women a long-overdue public identity in her book *Pink Collar Workers—Inside the World of Women's Work*. Like Charles Spencer, she too experienced some of the occupations discussed in her writing, but not in as much depth, and she observed these jobs with the specific intent of gathering background material for her book.

Howe, through accounts of individual women's lives as related to their work, describes the occupations of beautician, sales worker (this was her occupation for a short time), waitress, office worker, and homemaker. (Homemaking is the most common occupation for American women, and its status as unpaid labor with no financial or health benefits has long been unrealized.) All of these occupations employ primarily women, and as Howe points out, all are notoriously low in pay and security.

At first reading, it would appear that this book does not really deal directly with labor health problems. However, the obstacles of pink collar workers such as long hours, little financial or social recognition, or the difficulties of being a working mother all take their toll in the form of stress, a serious health problem. Also, specific hazards such as chemicals in the hairdresser's parlor, and standing for long hours as a sales clerk, are very real and pressing problems that must be remedied.

Susan Salisbury

New from the Labor Safety and Health Institute are two useful publications: **Local Union Hazard Control Handbook** and **Occupational Safety and Health Workbook**. Each is available for \$5.00.

**Local Union Hazard Control Handbook** includes case studies of self-help and preventive programs in local unions, including strategies for control of noise, silica, dust, and asbestos. Another section deals with screening on-the-job disability claims and suggests a cost-saving program for local unions. Also reprinted in the handbook are: "Controlling Occupational Hazards" by Frank Goldsmith and "Occu-

pational Illness—Workers' Compensation Doesn't Work."

**Occupational Safety and Health Workbook** reprints Labor Safety and Health Institute Guides on: building an occupational safety and health library in the local union; occupational health services in hospital clinics and emergency rooms; Health Systems Agency planning for OSHA; local union OSHA administration; and safety and health on the job. It also includes material on standard setting for vinyl chloride and coke oven emissions.

Send orders to: Labor Safety and Health Institute, 381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

## FILMS

**Health Hazard in the Shop** is a 16 mm., 25-minute film, in color and sound, from the University of Wisconsin. Focusing on OSHA industrial hygiene inspections, the film is intended to familiarize viewers with inspection procedures, equipment used, and rights and responsibilities of employee representatives and management when a health hazard is suspected.

The film can be used in worker education classes, training of safety and health compliance officers and of Industrial Hygienists, and for orienting low-level management and supervisors to industrial hygiene inspection procedures.

The film may be purchased for \$220. Rental is \$20.50 plus UPS charges outside Wisconsin for one or two days' use, and \$25.75 plus UPS charges for a five-day (Monday through Friday) period.

Specify BAVI film #1785 when ordering. Order from:

University of Wisconsin—Extension  
Bureau of Audio-Visual Instruction  
1327 University Avenue  
P.O. Box 2093  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701  
Phone: (608) 262-1644



## Safety Committees Required in Washington State

Employers in the State of Washington are required to have a safety committee composed of elected employer and employee representatives, under a regulation adopted by the State Dept. of Labor and Industries effective December 13, 1978.

The regulation, which applies to all employers without exception, provides that:

- The number of employer representatives may not exceed the number of employee representatives;
- There must be an elected chair;
- The committee must review all health and safety inspection reports and evaluate all accident reports;

- The committee must evaluate the employer's accident prevention program; and

- Attendance and subjects discussed must be documented, with minutes kept for one year and made available on request to inspectors from the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Administration (WISHA).

Information on the regulation (WAC 296-24-045) may be obtained from the Washington Dept. of Labor and Industries, Division of Industrial Safety and Health, 308 East Fourth, P.O. Box 207, Olympia, Washington 98504. Phone (206) 753-6500.

## New Health Chief For Cal-OSHA

Dr. Richard Wade, a toxicologist, has been appointed Deputy Chief of Health, Cal/OSHA; he began his work on March 1, 1979. Prior to joining the California program, Dr. Wade was Director of the Division of Environmental Health, Minnesota Department of Health. Along with Mike Schneider, Deputy Chief of Safety, Wade will serve under the direction of Art Carter, Chief of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

Wade holds a Ph.D. in Toxicology from the University of Michigan. Prior to his work in Minnesota, Dr. Wade was Chief of Environmental Health Services, City of Seattle and King County, Washington.

## NIOSH Warns Respirator Users

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has advised users of Scott Air Pak II/IIA and Pressur-Pak II/IIA self-contained breathing apparatus of potentially dangerous defects.

Split or punctured regulator diaphragms in these respirators can reduce respiratory protection or shorten service time, depending upon the mode in which the respirator is used.

NIOSH began this investigation following the recent death of three firefighters who were wearing this type of respirator, although it has not been established that the deaths were due to damaged regulator diaphragms. A sampling of the apparatus in the field has shown at least 10% of the units examined to have ruptured or punctured diaphragms.

NIOSH advises users to check Scott apparatus before each use for possible damaged diaphragms, in addition to performing regular monthly inspections. The manufacturer provides instructions for such a check.

Since it is not known whether failure occurs during assembly, storage, or use of the respirator regulator, extreme caution must be employed with using the respirator. If the user observes a loose or dislodged regulator cover, the cover must be removed and the diaphragm inspected before reassembly of the regulator.

NIOSH has requested the manufacturer to stop all sales of the respirator pending determination of the reason for and necessary corrective action to prevent diaphragm failure.

## CPSC Reports that High Vinyl Chloride Dose Causes Cancer

A single high dose of vinyl chloride, when inhaled, has caused cancer in animals, according to an April 26 report from the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The report suggests that a spill of vinyl chloride monomer could be a real threat to workers in a plant, safety personnel, and nearby residents.

A four-year study which produced these results was conducted by Bernard McNamara and staff at the Chemical System Laboratory in Maryland. The most important finding was that single one-hour exposures at high dose levels (both 50,000 parts per million and 5,000 parts per million were studied) can produce cancer in mice. The results of the study suggest very definitely that other carcinogens should be looked at in a similar fashion.

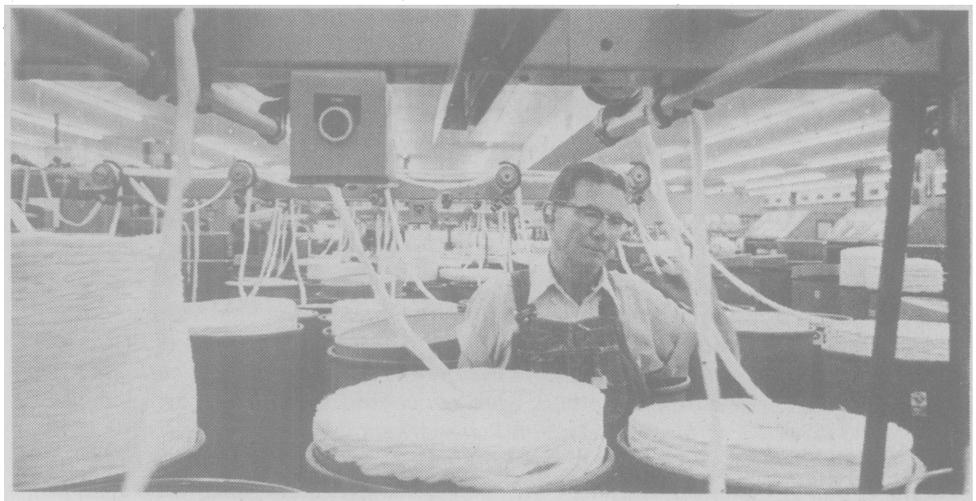
## NIOSH, OSHA Investigate Brain Cancer at Texas Plants

In mid-February, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), federal OSHA, and the Union Carbide Corporation began an investigation to determine whether there is an unusually high incidence of a rare form of brain cancer, glioblastoma multiform, in the Texas City, Texas area.

Ten reported deaths among Union Carbide employees in the Texas City plant, plus a smaller number at a nearby Monsanto Company plant, represent "triple the number of deaths due to a primary brain tumor that would be expected" in a population the size of the plants involved, according to Union Carbide.

Preliminary analysis of the work histories of employees who died from brain tumors indicate no common job assignment or exposure, according to Union Carbide. In particular, there was no common exposure to vinyl chloride, which has been linked to glioblastoma multiform in animals and humans. Vinyl chloride was manufactured at the plant from 1948 to 1969, and some is still used there.

At least two lawsuits have been filed by families of brain cancer victims against Union Carbide since the investigation began. Government and industry representatives will not comment on these cases.



## State of California Bans Stevens Products

David E. Janssen, director of the Dept. of General Services of the State of California, announced recently that the State of California will no longer purchase J.P. Stevens Co. products.

Citing Section 923 of the California Labor Code, which declares the policy of the State to be that "employees should be free from interference, restraint, or coercion in electing means of representation," and a 1954 opinion of former Attorney General Edmund G. Brown which defines "responsible bidder" to encompass a firm's "skill, judgment, integrity, and moral worth, and the quality, fitness, and capacity of his offer," Janssen announced the action following consultation with Dept. of Industrial Relations attorneys.

Since 1966, the National Labor Relations Board has issued 18 orders against J.P. Stevens for a variety of unfair labor practices. The textile firm has also been charged with several OSHA violations. Janssen said that, as a matter of record, J.P. Stevens has been involved in "numerous labor disputes which have resulted in adverse rulings."

"The record of J.P. Stevens in the area of labor relations practices, and collective bargaining in particular, has led us to conclude that your company should not and cannot be considered a responsible bidder or vendor," Janssen stated in a letter to Stevens officials.

—Organized Labor

## UAW WINS ASBESTOS CONTROL

Important reductions in asbestos exposure have been won in several United Auto Workers plants. In almost every case, controls stricter than required by law were achieved by local bargaining and use of the grievance procedure, backed by an informed and concerned membership.

At General Motors' Chevrolet Manufacturing plant in Saginaw, Michigan, tubs used to transport asbestos products are now color-coded, labeled, and not allowed in other areas of the plant, under terms of

the agreement with UAW Local 467. Workers are provided with coveralls, a dual system of lockers (one for work clothes and one for street clothes) was installed, showers were added, a better cleaning program was instituted, and air sampling results are posted.

Likewise, in Chrysler's Eldon Avenue Axle Plant, recent action by UAW Local 961 resulted in the entire brake shoe grinding operation being cleaned of asbestos and washed down, a leak in the new asbestos

pelletizer was repaired, a new vacuum cleaning system was added, and grinder exhaust ventilation was repaired.

Similar improvements have been won in Chevrolet Gear & Axle (UAW Local 235), Chrysler Trenton Chemical (UAW Local 372), Bendix-Windsor (UAW Local 195), and GM Delco-Moraine (UAW Local 696).

—UAW Occupational Safety and Health Newsletter

# Women's Coalition Studies a New Hazard

by Janet Bertinuson

*In the spring of 1978, a group of trade union women in the San Francisco Bay Area formed a coalition to discuss and study the effects on operators of working on video display terminals (vdt's.) (Vdt's are also referred to as cathode ray tubes or crt's.) Coalition members were concerned with the array of health problems experienced by themselves and co-workers who operate vdt's for long stretches of time up to an entire working day. The following article presents some of the information found by the coalition while researching hazards, and suggests some possible controls.*

The initial concern over health effects of working on vdt's focused on electromagnetic radiation released by the terminals. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) did several surveys, primarily in newspaper offices, after two copy editors developed cataracts. (Some forms of electromagnetic radiation are known to cause cataracts with long-term exposure.)

NIOSH scientists concluded that the vdt's were not producing levels of radiation sufficient to have caused cataracts. But it should be noted that other kinds of radiation, including x-rays, are produced by these terminals.

Studies of vdt operators in foreign countries, notably Austria, Germany, and Sweden, describe a number of common complaints and health problems. These include: visual deterioration and eyestrain; changes in visual acuity; headaches; general fatigue; and

muscle strain, particularly affecting the back and shoulders.

The increasing use of video display terminals suggests that greater numbers of workers will be experiencing such problems unless adequate controls are developed. Throughout the U.S., five to ten million vdt's are now estimated to be in use in telephone companies, banks, airline and newspaper offices, retail stores, insurance companies, and numerous other workplaces.

Many of the problems associated with vdt operations arise from the failure of most employers to consider ergonomic factors when installing vdt's. Ergonomics is the science of *designing the job to fit the worker*, as opposed to the general practice of trying to make workers adapt their movements, senses, and body to an already-designed job.

To prevent some of the common problems which terminal operators ex-

perience, both manufacturers and employers need to consider ergonomic principles with regard to the workplace and the equipment *before* the terminals are installed and while plans are being made for the workplace they will be put into. For example, special lighting and shields over screens would reduce glare, making the words or symbols easier to see, and the terminals themselves can be better designed to reduce flickering and ensure clearer characters so that they are easier to read.

While such changes are being engineered, or provisions are being made to redesign the work area, however, workers usually must continue to operate the terminals. The only immediately available tool to reduce symptoms experienced by operators is an increase in the frequency of rest breaks. In most cases current break time is inadequate to prevent problems, and could easily be lengthened to allow workers (and their eyes) a chance to rest from the screens.

Studies of vdt operators and reports of labor-management agreements show a variety of suggested break times.

Although no one knows exactly what length of time away from the screen would guarantee protection, these agreements are all attempts to reduce wear and tear on terminal operators. After a discussion on rest breaks and vdt's, Wage Board #4 of the California Industrial Welfare Commission recently recommended to the IWC that new regulations provide for a ten-minute break every hour during continuous work on terminals.

Increasing rest breaks and making some of the other suggested changes in the workplace and in the terminals themselves should reduce the problems experienced by terminal operators. But additional studies are necessary to determine the full extent of potential hazards and also to obtain input from vdt operators. Until now, the only input from workers has generally been feeding information into the terminal!

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# Flight Attendants Hold Health and Safety Conference

by Sidney Weinstein

On May 9, 1979, Teamsters Local 2707 sponsored a health and safety conference for flight attendants at the Teamsters Hall on Hegenberger Road in Oakland. The conference was dedicated to the memory of one member of the local, Patricia Spomer, who was killed in a Trans International Airlines (TIA) crash.

Speakers for the session were: Dr. Molly Coye, Janet Bertinuson, and Sidney Weinstein from the Labor Occupational Health Program; Charles Winget from the NASA Ames Research Center; Dr. U.A. Carred Sexton, Federal Aviation Administration Flight Surgeon; Hamilton Fairburn, Assistant Regional Administrator, Region IX, Occupational Safety and Health Administration; and Nancy Garcia, newly-appointed Director of Health and Safety for Teamsters Local 2707.

An overview of possible hazards affecting flight attendant health covered circadian rhythm shifts, fatigue, lack of humidity, pressurization and depres-



(Photo courtesy of Teamsters Local 2707.)

surization, jet fuel fumes, carbon monoxide, microwaves, poor design of work environment such as in galleys, noise, vibration, ozone, and radiation. The participants were flight attendants for TIA, World, Flying Tigers, and American Airlines.

As flight attendants are now beginning to fly longer and view their work as a lifetime profession, they are becoming more concerned about how flying conditions may be affecting their health, and whether anything can be done to prevent harm. Many of the flight attendants at the conference had been flying at least ten years. Most flight attendants in the group complained of chronic middle ear and sinus problems; chronic, debilitating fatigue; lower back and knee injuries. The dangers of wearing flammable clothing and working in a flammable cabin as well as stress from long duty days were also mentioned. Having to share a room and sleep during the day while roommates and the rest of the world are making noise; eating food with low nutritive value; and improperly designed jump seats were other problems raised.

Almost no research has been done on this predominantly women's occupation, although there are approximately 5,000 flight attendants in the U.S.

And to make matters even more difficult, there are no adequate regulations covering flight attendant hazards or governmental mechanisms by which flight attendants can address their problems. In response to a question about why this is so, Dr. Sexton of the FAA indicated that because there wasn't enough money to do "a good job," the FAA decided to do nothing.

Flight attendants participating in this conference decided to make a number of issues union priorities for the next year. These include shorter duty days; single rooms; and more educational sessions on health and safety for the rest of the membership. They will also pressure FAA to assert its jurisdiction by implementing measures to improve flight attendant safety and health; join with other flight attendant groups; seek funds to do the necessary research; and focus more attention on hazardous working conditions.



Ester Spomer (center), mother of Pat Spomer, and Pat's former roommate Janie Rommel (right) talk with Sidney Weinstein of the LOHP staff. (Photo courtesy of Teamster Local 2707.)

## MOVING?

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# Datebook



*'Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Health and Safety'*

## LOHP, Sacramento Labor Council Plan June Conference

A conference on health and safety for trade unionists in the Sacramento area will be co-sponsored by the Central Labor Council of Sacramento and the Labor Occupational Health Program June 14 and 15.

Conference site is the Woodlake Inn, 500 Leisure Lane, Sacramento, CA 95815.

One hundred and fourteen local unions have been invited, including AFL-CIO affiliates, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the Teamsters, the United Auto

Workers, and other independent union organizations.

The conference, titled "Everything You Wanted to Know About Health and Safety But Were Afraid to Ask," will give active union members and officers a complete picture of the health and safety field. Topics covered will include: the law, rights of workers, medical protection, collective bargaining developments, the standard-setting process, and related matters.

Sufficient staff will be on hand to answer questions and give attention to

specialized problems any particular group may wish to raise.

A registration fee of \$15 will cover the cost of lunch on Thursday, and materials. Registrations may be mailed directly to LOHP; a check for \$15, payable to The Regents of the University of California, should be sent to: LOHP, Institute of Industrial Relations, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. If you are registering for a union, please include the names of all your union's delegates.

### CONFERENCES

#### PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

Presbyterian Hospital of Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco is calling a two-day health and safety conference focusing on problems in hospitals.

The conference will take place on July 20 and 21, 1979, at the hospital, located at Clay and Buchanan Sts. in San Francisco.

Emphasis will be on methods for establishing effective health and safety programs, existing state and federal regulations, hospital health, hospital safety, and problem-solving approaches.

For more information, contact: Dr.

Linda Hawes Clever, Chairperson, Dept. of Public Health, P.O. Box 7999, San Francisco, CA.

### CLASSES

#### MERRIT COLLEGE

The Labor Occupational Health Program and Merritt College in Oakland will sponsor a six-week health and safety class starting June 16, 1979 and continuing through July 31.

Classes will be held at the Institute of Industrial Relations, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley, from 7 to 10 p.m. on Tuesdays.

The subjects covered will provide an

introduction to health and safety for working people. Some of the topics will be: what OSHA is all about and how to use the law; organizing a health and safety program on the job; making a workplace health and safety check; collective bargaining issues and other approaches to health and safety; rights of workers; resources available in the community; and individual issues and problems as brought to the class.

College credit will be given for those desiring it. Although you may enroll on the first night of the class, if you know that you plan to attend, please write LOHP or call us at (415) 642-5507.

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