

Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

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From:  
Sent: Friday, May 18, 2007 11:20 AM  
To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)  
Cc: Doyle, Glenn (CDC/NIOSH/EID); Chen, Jihong (Jane) (CDC/NIOSH/EID) (CTR)  
Subject: 103 - Endicott Report Comments

Name

Organization

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Address

USA

Comments

As a former contractor (summers; ) and a former IBM worker in Building in Endicott I can tell you first hand that your proposed study is flawed. First, temporary workers were all employed for less then 1 year so you are ignoring them. Second, temporary workers were generally given the jobs with the most contact with the chemicals. The permanent employees had far less direct contact with the chemicals. My employment with at IBM involved various jobs, some with no exposure (cleaning office areas, stairwells and bathrooms), other jobs involved significant exposure. My months as a employee generally involved contact with the chemicals from 8 to 10 hours a day. My first assignment was rebuilding the racks that held the computer chips as they went through the Austin Tinner. While doing that job my hands were constantly cracking, turning black and frequently bleeding. No one ever informed me what these racks went through or what chemicals I was being exposed to. I knew my skin reacted that way when working with petroleum products so I assumed that there was some petroleum related residue on the racks. No permanent employee ever did that job while I worked there. No one that did that job while I was there was hired as a permanent employee. The only people doing it had college degrees and IBM wouldn't hire people with degrees to work on the line. After a couple months of re-building those racks I worked a washing machine and spent 10 hours a day placing trays of computer chips into and out of a machine the size of a garage that washed the chips in perc. I was also told to enter that machine several times a day to check on it. I did train 1 permanent employee on that job but at the end of the first day she passed out and I don't think she ever ran that machine again. My next assignment involved working the door on the Austin Tinner putting the racks of chips in and out of the machine. No one else on the team had the amount of contact with the chemicals as the door operator. The lead just supervised things, hardly ever touching anything. Their was a quality control person who examined the chips under the microscope but never touched the machine. I never saw a permanent employee do that job (but some temporary employees did become permanent). In that same department there were numerous jobs that had nothing to do with the chemicals other then whatever they inhaled. Working the and the I was in constant contact with the chemicals. I was even drenched in Perc once when a drain on the tinner became clogged. They sent me to the nurses station where I was told to take a shower, but the water was so cold (and couldn't be adjusted) I couldn't stay in the water for more then a few seconds at a time. I spent most of the time just standing there shivering. I had to wait until I got off my shift before I could go home and take a real shower.

In March I was diagnosed with cancer. My urologist (and everything I've read) says Cancer is caused by smoking or exposure to chemicals. I've never smoked. You're proposal is obviously right that it often takes years for the cancer to appear but by ignoring the temporary workers you are ignoring those that had the most direct exposure. I would also suggest that you track the cases

not so much by department as by the actual job the employee performed. IBM isn't going to give you that information, they probably can't, but they should be able to identify the temporary workers and workers can tell you what jobs they performed. You should also be able to obtain incident reports. I know when I went to the nurses station I had to fill out paperwork about the incident. Why don't you try and obtain that information.