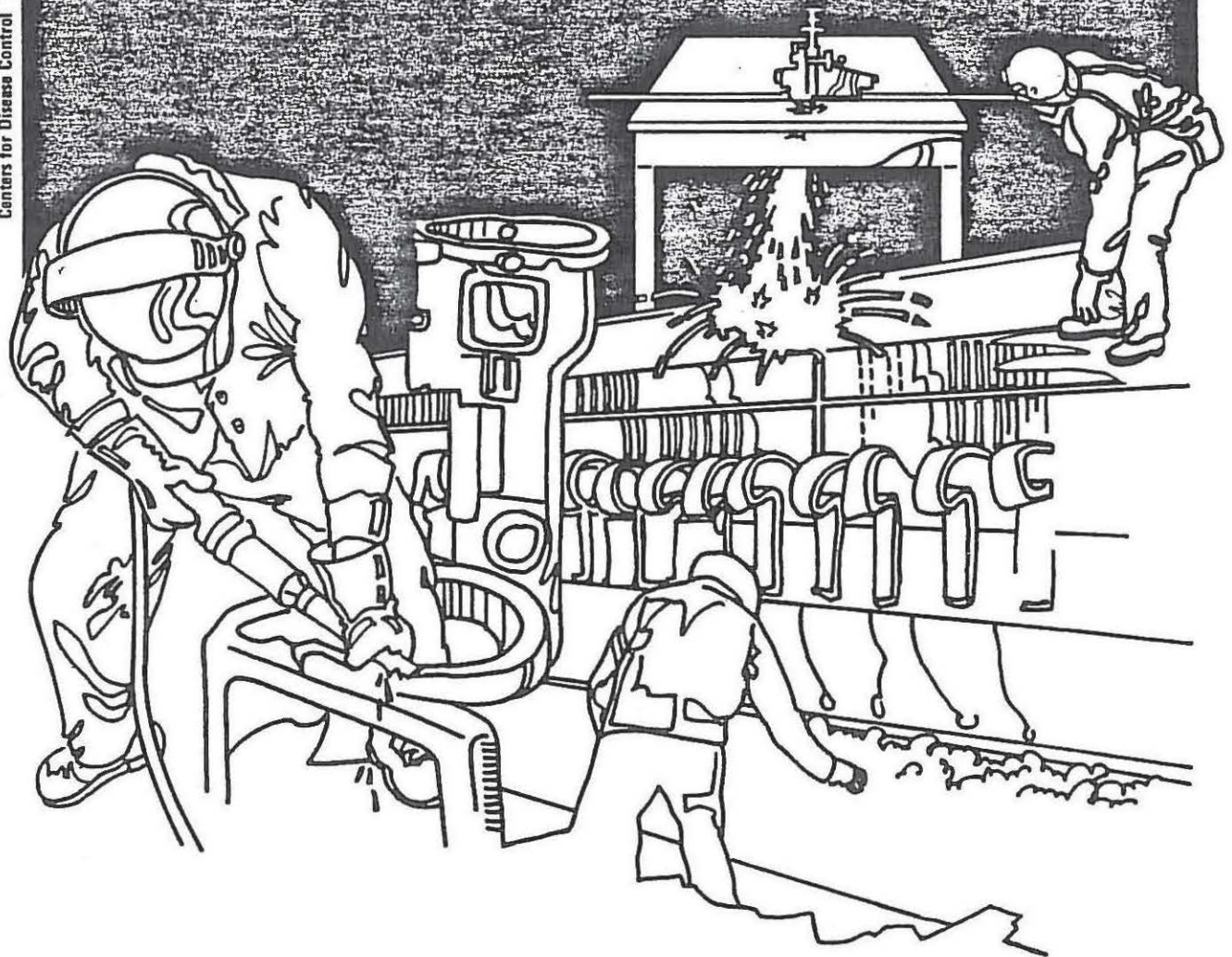


NIOSH



Health Hazard Evaluation Report

80-053-795

PREFACE

The Hazard Evaluations and Technical Assistance Branch of NIOSH conducts field investigations of possible health hazards in the workplace. These investigations are conducted under the authority of Section 20(a)(6) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. 699(a)(6), which authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services, following a written request from any employer or authorized representative of employees, to determine whether any substance normally found in the place of employment has potentially toxic effects in such concentrations as used or found.

Mention of company names or products does not constitute endorsement by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

HE 80-053-795
January 1981
AT&T Longlines
Ragersville, Ohio

NIOSH INVESTIGATOR:
Richard Hartle, IH

I. SUMMARY

On January 2, 1980, NIOSH received a request for a Health Hazard Evaluation from the Communication Workers of America, Local 4354 concerning possible occupational exposures to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) and asbestos, plus possible contamination of drinking water at the AT&T Longlines facility located at Ragersville, Ohio.

The Ragersville facility is one of several microwave communications repeater stations which operates at transmitting powers of 2 watts to 12 watts and at frequencies of 3700 to 4200 MHz. Three telecommunications technicians are normally employed at this location and are responsible for the maintenance of three similar facilities in the area.

On February 4, 1980, a site visit of the facility was made by NIOSH and OSHA officers (Interim #1, February 1980). Results of work-area monitoring for incident non-ionizing radiation showed levels below the detection limit of the sampling device (0.1 mW/cm^2). Analysis of insulation material showed no asbestos content. Reference to Westinghouse purchase specifications identified the suspected PCB containing material to be polyisobutylene impregnated paper, which has little potential for causing ill health effects. Based on two drinking water samples collected on March 26 and July 17, 1980, which were analyzed via the Ames Salmonella/microsome assay system, it can be concluded that there is no detectable mutagenic material in the water supply.

On the basis of the data obtained in this investigation NIOSH determined that a hazard does not exist from occupational exposure to asbestos, PCB's, non-ionizing radiation, or contaminated drinking water at the Ragersville facility.

KEYWORDS: SIC 4899, Microwave communication, non-ionizing radiation, Ames Salmonella/microsome assay, asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyl

II. AUTHORSHIP AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Report Prepared By: Richard W. Hartle
Industrial Hygienist
Industrial Hygiene Section

Originating Office: Hazard Evaluations and Technical
Assistance Branch
Division of Surveillance, Hazard
Evaluations and Field Studies
Cincinnati, Ohio

Report Typed By: Jackie Woodruff
Clerk/Typist
Industrial Hygiene Section

III. DISTRIBUTION AND AVAILABILITY OF DETERMINATION REPORT

Copies of this Determination Report are currently available, upon request, from NIOSH, Division of Technical Services, Information and Dissemination Section, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226. After ninety (90) days, the report will be available through the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Springfield, Virginia 22161. Information regarding its availability through NTIS can be obtained from NIOSH, Publications Office at the Cincinnati, Ohio address.

Copies of this report have been sent to:

1. AT&T Longlines, Raggerville, Ohio.
2. Communication Workers of America, Local 4354, Columbus, Ohio.
3. Communication Workers of America, Washington, D.C.
4. OSHA, Region V
5. NIOSH, Region V