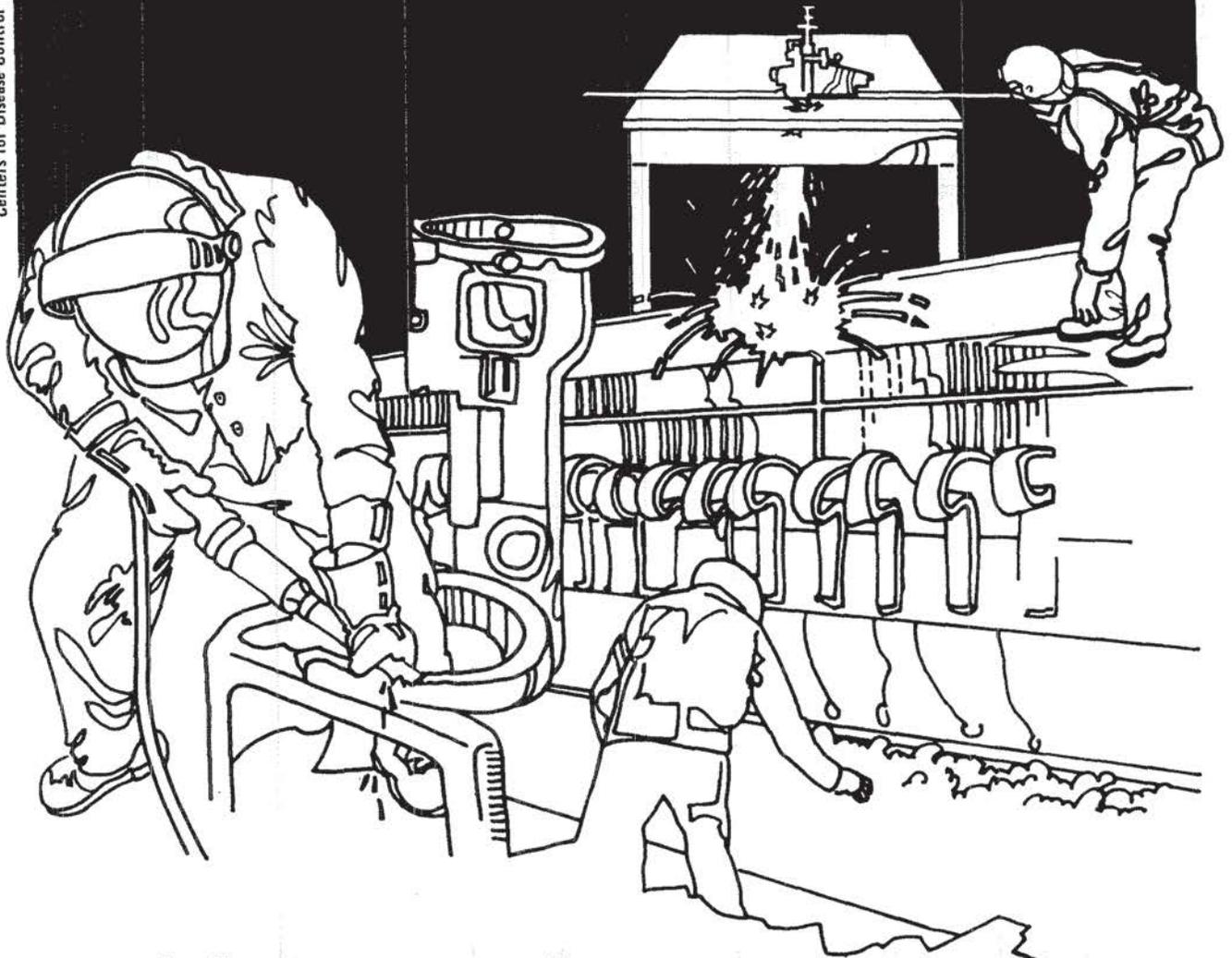


NIOSH



Health Hazard Evaluation Report

HETA 81-042-832
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
NEW YORK AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC
CONTROL CENTER
RONKONKOMA, NEW YORK

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. 669(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.

The Hazard Evaluations and Technical Assistance Branch also provides, upon request, medical, nursing, and industrial hygiene technical and consultative assistance (TA) to Federal, state, and local agencies; labor; industry and other groups or individuals to control occupational health hazards and to prevent related trauma and disease.

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

HETA 81-042-832
March 1981
Federal Aviation Administration
New York Air Route Traffic
Control Center
Ronkonkoma, New York

NIOSH Investigator:
Nicholas Fannick, I.H.

I. Summary

In October, 1980, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) received a request from the Federal Aviation Administration to evaluate exposure to air-borne asbestos at the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center (NYARTCC), adjacent to the Long Island MacArthur Airport, Ronkonkoma, NY. The health hazard was requested by the management of the facility, in response to the concerns voiced by the air traffic controllers about the airborne asbestos from the treated beams in the old attic area.

The Control Center consists of two interconnected buildings. The air traffic controllers work in one large room in the new building, which was constructed in 1972. Asbestos was not used in the construction of the new building. The old building, constructed in 1960, has structural beams in its attic which were treated with an asbestos - containing fire-retardant. Several offices, including the air traffic controllers training rooms are located in the old building. The rafters are separated from the attic area by false ceilings. Approved respirators are worn by maintenance personnel whenever work must be performed in the attic area. However, there was concern that others in the buildings might be exposed to airborne asbestos dislodged from the rafters. The control center has a work force of approximately 200 during the day and 50 during the night shift.

On October 7, 1980, area samples for airborne asbestos were collected in the attic and flight controllers' areas on "AA" filters using a sampling rate of approximately 2 liters per minute for 4 to 4 1/2 hours. The samples were analyzed by NIOSH's method "P & CAM 239", using phase contrast microscopy. No asbestos fibers were detected. The accompanying table lists sampling locations, volumes and the lower limit of detection for analytical method employed.

On the basis of the data obtained in this investigation, NIOSH determined that no hazard from exposure to asbestos fibers was present and no recommendations to control exposure are considered necessary. Since sprayed-on asbestos can become dislodged over time, the condition of the sprayed-on asbestos surfaces should be evaluated periodically (every 6 months), as outlined in part 1, chapter 7 of "Asbestos-Containing Materials in School Buildings: A Guidance Document".

KEYWORDS: SIC 9621 (Control Tower Operation), Air Traffic Controllers, Asbestos.

II. Authorship and Acknowledgement

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III. Distribution and Availability

For the purpose of informing affected employees, the employer should post this report for at least 30 days in a prominent place(s) near where employees work.

Copies of this report will be available from NIOSH division of Technical Services, Information Resources and Dissemination Section, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226, for 90 days. Thereafter, copies will be available from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), Springfield, Virginia. Information concerning its availability through NTIS can be obtained from the NIOSH publication office at the above Cincinnati address.

Copies of this report have been sent to:

1. Federal Aviation Administration, Jamaica, NY
2. Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, Veteran's Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11787
3. U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA, Region II
4. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, NIOSH, Region II
5. N.Y. State Department of Health, Division Occupational Safety & Health

NYARTCC
Ronkonkoma, NY
Asbestos Concentrations
October 1980

Location	Sample volume (liters)	Asbestos concentrations (fibers per cubic centimeter of air)
Air Traffic Controllers Area		
Aisle A	690	< 0.007
Aisle B	620	< 0.007
Aisle C	630	< 0.007
Aisle D	630	< 0.007
Aisle F	500	< 0.009
Aisle G	680	< 0.007
Old Attic (asbestos fire-retardant)	335	< 0.013
New Attic (non asbestos fire retardant)	665	< 0.007
Training Room	630	< 0.007

NIOSH recommended exposure limit = 0.1 fiber per cubic centimeter of air.

OSHA permissible exposure limit = 2.0 fibers per cubic centimeter of air.

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