

U.S. Department of Energy
Hanford Site

OCT 23 2009

2010I-015

09-HAB-0005

Ms. Susan L. Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
Enviroissues Hanford Project Office
713 Jadwin, Suite 4
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

WORKER COMPENSATION REGARDING BERYLLIUM DISEASE (ADVICE #218) AND
BERYLLIUM DISEASE PREVENTION AT HANFORD (ADVICE #217)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the Hanford Advisory Board's (HAB) continued interest in worker safety and health programs, which remain an essential component of Hanford cleanup activities. DOE has promulgated two Rules, 10 CFR 850, *Chronic Beryllium Disease Prevention Program* (CBDPP), and 10 CFR 851, *Worker Safety and Health Program*. Both of these rules establish more stringent safety and health requirements at Hanford than those applied to work done in the private sector.

HAB advice #217 suggests that DOE conduct an enhanced effort to pinpoint the sources of beryllium contamination and mitigate the risks. As required by 10 CFR 850, any work involving potential exposure to beryllium is evaluated prior to performing the work. This includes activities such as decontamination, decommissioning, and demolition. If this evaluation indicates that beryllium exposure is anticipated, the work task will be performed by beryllium assigned workers who have been given beryllium worker training and placed in the beryllium medical surveillance program. DOE is also investigating the feasibility of using a portable beryllium detection system at Hanford.

HAB advice #217 also suggests that DOE enhance the sitewide education program to encourage employees to take the Beryllium sensitivity tests. Currently there are three levels of beryllium training provided. The first course provides general information on beryllium awareness and is included in the Hanford General Employee Training. The second course is required for all identified beryllium associated workers and provides additional details of our CBDPP and the possible health risks of past exposure to beryllium. The first two courses meet 10 CFR 850 37 (b & c) requirements. The third course is for beryllium workers and provides valuable information about how to work safely around beryllium.

DOE insists that worker protection remain a core value for our contractors, and this is reflected by the outstanding safety records at Hanford. Additionally, DOE has established the Integrated Safety Management System, which requires site contractors to integrate provisions for worker safety and health into work planning and execution systems. DOE also encourages contractors to actively participate in DOE's Voluntary Protection Program.

Response to HAB advice #217 & #218

HAB Consensus Advice: Beryllium Disease Prevention at Hanford & Worker Compensation Regarding Beryllium Disease
Letter from David Brockman & Shirley Olinger dated 10/23/09

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As the HAB is aware, DOE has worked closely with the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, the Beryllium Awareness Group (comprised of Hanford workforce members with beryllium sensitivity and workers with Chronic Beryllium Disease) and DOE contractors, to develop a Hanford Site CBDPP. The Hanford Site CBDPP is addressing those items identified in HAB Advice #217 that are under DOE's direct control. DOE aggressively promotes the voluntary medical surveillance program available to all Hanford employees as well as the Former Worker Medical Screening Program that is available to retired Hanford workers. DOE will continue to communicate our expectations that site contractors place beryllium affected workers in jobs that protect them from further beryllium exposure, without loss of compensation. While 10 CFR 850 establishes requirements for a medical surveillance program, worker participation in such programs is voluntary. However, DOE contractors have made medical surveillance a condition of employment if the worker's Employee Job Task Analysis indicates that the worker may be assigned tasks with potential beryllium exposure.

HAB Advice #218 suggests that DOE educate the local medical community on the health hazards of beryllium. DOE is working with Hanford's medical services contractor, AdvanceMed Hanford, to develop a strategy to educate the local medical community on the risks and symptoms of beryllium exposure. DOE, through the Office of Science and the National Laboratory system, actively funds mission-related research in a broad number of areas; however, medical research is conducted by other federal agencies such as the National Institute of Health and the Center for Disease Control.

HAB Advice #218 also suggests that DOE review established compensation programs with Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act and Washington State Workman's Compensation Laws, which are not administered by DOE. DOE does actively interface with the administrators of both these programs, the Department of Labor and Washington State Labor and Industries, respectively. In fact, DOE has full-time employees assigned to interface with these agencies on a wide variety of issues, including beryllium.


The Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) has revitalized the DOE's Former Worker Medical Screening Program, otherwise known as the Former Worker Program (FWP). The FWP identifies, notifies and makes medical screening services available to the more than 600,000 former employees who have worked in the weapons complex during the past 60 years for DOE, contractor, and subcontractor employees or its predecessor agencies. HSS has developed stronger and more effective relationships with the Labor Department and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to increase the effectiveness of programs addressing the health care of former workers, and enhancing assistance to all eligible workers who had exposures to radiation and other toxic substances. In their annual report, dated February 2009, over 360,000 former workers have been contacted and over 55,000 medical screening examinations have been provided to those who volunteer to participate in the FWP. In addition, follow-up re-screening exams have been provided to over 7,300 former workers. Below is the link to that report.


http://www.hss.doe.gov/healthsafety/fwsp/formerworkermed/2008_FWP_Annual_Report.pdf

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We appreciate the HAB's interest and advice regarding worker health and safety. DOE is implementing a sitewide beryllium program to be consistent across the Hanford Site contractors and to ensure that workers who become sensitized get the best possible care.

If you should have any question or would like additional clarification on any of these issues, please contact Steve Bertness at (509) 376-6221.


David A. Brockman, Manager
Richland Operations Office


Shirley J. Olinger, Manager
Office of River Protection

Enclosures:

1. Ltr. from HAB – Advice #217
2. Ltr. from HAB – Advice #218