

HER E-Bulletin

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Calendar

May 18-23	Annual Meeting, Berlin, Germany
October 21-25	Third International Symposium on Silica, Silicosis, Cancer and Other Diseases, Santa Margherita, Italy

Health, Environmental and Regulatory Issues (General)

Asbestos in Perlite Bulletin – Additional information has been received from the international membership and a final draft bulletin has been produced. It can be found on the Institute's member website, under the HER Committee, in-progress. The conclusions remain the same; there is no evidence of any asbestos in perlite.

OSHA - On April 5, OSHA announced a comprehensive plan to reduce ergonomic injuries. The plan will be designed to prevent ergonomics injuries before they occur and reach a much larger number of at-risk workers than the previously rejected rule. OSHA expects to begin releasing guidelines ready for application in selected industries this year. The plan includes Enforcement, Compliance Assistance, Hispanics Outreach and Ergonomics Research.

OSHA is now publishing an electronic biweekly e-news memo called Quick Takes. To subscribe go to OSHA's Homepage, <http://www.osha.gov> and click on QuickTakes.

MSHA - Nothing new to report from MSHA. They are still planning to put the Final Rule for Hazard Communication into effect on June 30, 2002 with some possible modifications.

White Paper on Chemical Management – The EU White Paper on Chemical Management continues to be an issue of concern and is being taken very seriously both in Europe and the US. The policy calls for a tiered approach according to volume for chemical registration, evaluation and assessment. Substances exceeding 1,000 tons will be required to submit registration forms by the end of 2005 and testing completed by 2010. This approach puts the industrial minerals industry at the forefront of the tiered system. If the original plan is followed the "White Paper" could be implemented as a regulation as early as this year. There is likely to be considerable debate before this happens. Will Perlite be included? At this time it is unclear. The issue will continue to be followed.

Crystalline Silica

US -

Consensus Standard, Crystalline Silica – Nothing new to report.

Papers

1. Multifactorial Aetiology of Lung Cancer Among Silica-exposed Workers, P.

Cocco, Ann. Acad. Med. Singapore 2001; 30:468-474

This is a very interesting paper that criticizes the IARC classification system and concludes that “[I]f silica acts as a human lung carcinogen depending upon certain occupational exposure circumstances, perhaps those circumstances, and not silica itself should be classified, for their human carcinogenicity potential.” The author talks about the lack of consistency of the findings in both experimental (animal) and human results over the years. He goes on to suggest that silica may simply be one of the many triggers (associated risk factors) in the development of the disease along with others such as asbestos, smoking, radon, arsenic, hexavalent chromium, PAHs, diesel exhaust, etc., etc. and not a specific cause.