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17 June 1948

Dr. Harriet Hardy

R. E. Schreiber

Possible Exposure to BeO Dust

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Reference: LAB-AM-44.

I am writing this at the recommendation of E. R. Jette. The incident cited below was mentioned during conversations with his this morning and he immediately urged that you be informed. My recollections follow:

The BeO tamper for the original water-boiler (lopo) included some special shapes intended to fit the spherical solution container. These were made here, and you are probably familiar with the history of their fabrication. We found that the course of bricks intended to fit around the poles of the spherical container did not have the right contour. After some discussion, it was decided that six bricks in each course should be mounted on a face plate and ground to shape on a high-speed diamond wheel. H. C. Brockman, present foreman of V-shop, did the work. I made the calculations for the cuts and stayed with Brockman throughout the work. Because of the restricted nature of the material, no other personnel were in the shop except a security guard who was never near the machining operation. The bricks were chucked up on a special face plate and mounted up in a large lathe in the Post Machine Shop. The diamond grinder was mounted on the tool post of the lathe. A wet grinding process was used with water as a coolant. The room was well ventilated and there was no noticeable dust formation. We would, however, find the BeO powder on our hands and on parts of the lathe when the coolant evaporated.

The job took approximately two days. The time was early in 1944, probably February.

From the toxic standpoint, this was probably a much safer operation than the grinding and scraping operations performed previously in Q-Building while the bricks were being formed. Since different personnel were involved, the information may be of interest to you.

RES

R. E. Schreiber
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RES/fem
cc - E. R. Jette
file

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