



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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AIR TOXICS AND RADIATION OFFICE OF  
BRANCH ENFORCEMENT AND  
U.S. EPA, REGION V COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

Mr. Dale L. Keyes  
Environmental Sciences, Inc.  
105 East Speedway Boulevard  
Tucson, AZ 85705

Dear Mr. Keyes:

This is in response to your June 13, 1994 letter requesting an official re-evaluation of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidance on floor tile interpretations under the asbestos National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP). Specifically you request that EPA re-evaluate the use of the term "extensive breakage" as the criterion for judging if the floor tile has become or will become regulated.

We have reviewed your request and we feel that the use of "extensive breakage" is appropriate, and is not a new term developed for EPA's "A Guide to Normal Demolition Practices Under the Asbestos NESHAP." In the preamble of the November 1990 asbestos NESHAP revision, EPA responded to the comment that including the term "broken" in the rule could be interpreted as substantially increasing the scope of the standard and therefore, EPA removed it. The preamble further explained that "... most nonfriable material can be broken without releasing significant quantities of airborne asbestos fibers. It is only when the material is extensively damaged, i.e., crumbled, pulverized or reduced to powder, that the potential for significant fiber release is greatly increased."

In your letter you also state that you cannot find the term chipping in the text of the asbestos NESHAP, and that "chipping" is not "sanding, grinding, cutting or abrading." "Grinding" as defined in the rule means "to reduce to powder or small fragments and includes mechanical chipping or drilling." The important factor in this definition is the extent of damage caused to the material and not how the damage was done. As stated in our January 8, 1992 determination (see enclosure), "[t]he extent of breakage which will render the ACM [asbestos-containing material] friable depends to some degree on the condition of the ACM prior to the abatement operation. This is true for both category I and



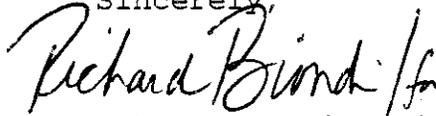
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II ACM. Therefore, it is difficult to make a general statement on the level of breakage which causes ACM to become regulated. A case-by-case determination must be made considering the condition of the material and the forces which have or will act upon it."

If problems are encountered during the course of a floor tile removal project, the contractor should stop the job and notify EPA or its local delegated agency that the job has become subject to the asbestos NESHAP, and then proceed according to the regulations.

This determination has been coordinated with EPA's Office of Enforcement and the Emission Standards Division of the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards. If you have any questions, please contact Tom Ripp of my staff at (703) 308-8727.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Bindorf".

John B. Rasnic, Director  
Manufacturing, Energy, and Transportation Division  
Office of Compliance

Enclosure