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Relaxed cotton dust rules moved

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Reagan administration has proposed cotton dust standards be relaxed for so-called nontextile industries while strict engineering controls be retained for textile manufacturers, officials said Wednesday.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration will publish its new proposals Friday in the Federal Register, said spokesman Akio Konoshima. Public hearings on the proposed changes are scheduled for September and October in Washington, Columbia, S.C. and Dallas before the proposals can become regulations.

OSHA Administrator

Thorne G. Auchter said the proposals call for the retention of a permissible worker exposure standard of 200 micrograms per cubic meter of air for yarn manufacturing.

Textile firms will have to meet the standard through engineering controls, which the industry has called too expensive. The industry contended worker respirators were preferable to the ventilation controls. Slashing and weaving would have a standard of 750 micrograms of dust per cubic foot of air.

However, standards would be relaxed for knitting, classing, warehousing, cottonseed processing and waste processing.

"OSHA has found no evidence of significant risk in the industries proposed for exemption, a finding we must make for any permanent standard," said Auchter.

A standard of 1,000 micrograms per cubic meter would be retained for waste recycling, blending, cleaning and sorting, ginning and mattress assembly, he said.

The proposed revisions are expected to save the industry an estimated \$94.4 million in capital costs and \$30.7 million in annual operating costs, agency studies indicate. An estimated 76,000 workers are employed in the exempted nontextile industries, leaving about 95,400 work-

ers still covered by the strictest standards. "We believe the proposed changes will not only resolve pending legal uncertainties and overcome existing technical difficulties in enforcing the current standard, but will benefit both the overall cotton industry and the workers involved," said Auchter.

Other proposed changes include:

- Adding action levels of one-half the permissible exposure levels for the textile industry. Training, monitoring, medical surveillance and other requirements will be reduced or eliminated for exposure below the action levels.
- Extending the compliance

period for engineering controls two years until March 1985 for ring spinning, twisting and spooling of cotton content coarse yarn.

- Modifying the definition of "washed cotton" to encourage experimentation and innovation in processing.

- Restructuring technical requirements on monitoring, area sampling and related matters to make clearer and more cost-effective.

Under the current standard, Auchter said, industrial provisions begin to apply to dust in processing.

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Fugitive surrenders to FBI following six year search

United Press International
MIAMI — A long-sought fugitive accused of seriously wounding two FBI agents last week surrendered voluntarily — although he had vowed never to be taken alive — to protect his girlfriend and her baby, the FBI says.

Clarence Eugene Robinson, wanted for murder for nearly six years, got out of a car in front of the FBI's Miami office Tuesday night and surrendered to agent-in-charge Joseph V. Corless. He was to appear before a U.S. magistrate Wednesday.

Robinson, 38, is charged with two counts of assaulting a federal officer. The state of Florida wants him for the 1977 murder of a deputy sheriff.

The surrender was set up by a telephone call Tuesday afternoon to the Jacksonville FBI that "just came out of the blue. We did not expect him to surrender," Corless said.

He said the call came from a Miami lawyer, who arranged the surrender at the request of Robinson's woman companion. Corless declined to identify the woman.

Robinson had been the subject of an intense five-day search, with dozens of heavily armed FBI agents, state and local police officers swarming over central and northern Florida. They roused guests from a DeLand motel where the fugitive had been reported, from a campground where he had hid, and descended on a remote woodland spot where officers finally discovered his getaway car earlier Tuesday.

The manhunt began early Friday at Orange City, a small west Volusia County town about

30 miles north of Orlando. Agents Dennis Wickline, Thomas Sobolewski, 40, and another agent were thought they recognized Robinson coming out of a residential area.

When the agents approached him, the man opened a gun hidden by a newspaper, carried, Wickline was hit in the stomach and staggered in the back and leg.

Both agents are still hospitalized and reported in serious but stable condition.

O'Neill expects Congress' favor for his \$700 tax-cap proposal

United Press International
WASHINGTON — House Speaker Thomas O'Neill says he expects Congress will support his proposal to limit the July 1 tax cut to \$700, even though President Reagan opposes it.

House Democrats agreed Tuesday something must do about the 10 percent tax cut scheduled for July 1, but Demo-

cratic Leader Jim Wright of Texas said they postponed the decision of whether to limit or repeal it until the leadership could tabulate the results of a questionnaire distributed to the members.

Following the closed meeting, O'Neill said he expects his party, which holds a majority in the House, will endorse the tax-cap proposal.

Under O'Neill's plan, every taxpayer would get a 10 percent cut in tax rates, but no taxes would be reduced by more than \$700. O'Neill said the limit, which would affect mainly those who earn more than \$50,000, would save \$6 billion in 1984 and almost \$7 billion in 1985.

O'Neill's assertion that his \$700 tax cap would affect mainly taxpayers with incomes over

\$50,000 is based on a plan return with deductions averaging 23 percent of adjusted income.

But analysis by the Joint Committee said single taxpayers with incomes of \$29,800 and deductions would be affected the limit, as would taxpayers with incomes of \$29,800 and no deductions.

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FHA interest rate up to 12 percent

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The FHA-insured mortgage interest rate went up from 11.5 percent to 12 percent Wednesday, the first increase in the rate in more than a year.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Samuel Pierce Jr. said Tuesday that the increase is necessary to keep mortgage money flowing for middle-income home buyers.

The Federal Housing Administration interest rate is the rate allowed on federally insured mortgages for single family homes.

"Under the present rate, many potential home buyers are denied the more favorable FHA-insured loans they need to achieve home ownership," Pierce said.

But the increase, in some respects, is at least a temporary blow to the administration's insistence housing would be one of the leaders in the nation's economic recovery.

In the past year, as conventional interest rates have fallen followed very shortly by HUD-announced declines in the FHA

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rate, administration has said the declines in the recovery of the housing market and therefore showed a rebound in the economy.

Housing officials are to put the best face possible on Tuesday's announcement — one that had been seen by the Mortgage Bankers Association, the primary group issuing FHA mortgages.

The assistant secretary of housing, Philip Abrams, also serves as federal housing commissioner, said the increase is a "technical adjustment reflecting the current situation in the marketplace."

Reaction to the announcement was mixed. A spokesman for the Mortgage Bankers Association said he believes the recovery will continue, and "we can have interest rates."

A spokesman for the National Association of Home Builders, which had tried to block change, agreed the increase not necessarily the beginning of a long trend back up in mortgage rates.

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