

Schools to be searched for asbestos Old procedure used to stretch short bones

AUSTIN (AP) — In one of the most extensive undertakings in Texas school history, every single school building — public and private — must be inspected this year for materials that contain asbestos.

For years, asbestos was used to insulate, sound-proof and fireproof buildings. But asbestos has been linked to cancer, and a federal law gives 1,050 or so school districts in Texas until Oct. 12 to submit plans to remove the substance. The order affects some 29,000 buildings.

Dr. Larry Britton, director of environmental sciences for Texas Research Institute, predicts asbestos inspections in buildings will become as common as home termite inspections.

TRI's laboratories in Austin have been analyzing asbestos samples since 1985, but Britton says the real crush, with schools, is yet to come. "By summer, we will run shifts to keep up with the demand."

Officials at the State Health Department, which was designated as the Texas agency in charge of complying with Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act — or AHERA — acknowledge that there is no way it could analyze asbestos samples from all school districts.

"Our target list includes those schools with the fewest resources," said Elvin Burnside, a regis-

tered sanitarian with the Health Department. Burnside, Britton and Jerry Lauderdale, director of the department's Occupational and Safety Division, discussed AHERA and its impact on schools, as well as possible problems, in recent interviews.

AHERA was signed into law by President Reagan in October 1986, setting in motion the national effort to make schools safe from asbestos.

Under the law, all school buildings for kindergarten through 12th grade must be inspected for asbestos by a person who has completed a training course approved by the federal Environmental Protection Agency. Then, in Texas, a plan must be presented to the Health Department to prevent the materials from becoming a health hazard.

After a plan is approved, it must be implemented by June 29, 1989. Asbestos does not necessarily have to be removed from buildings, which is expensive, but just made safe, Burnside said.

But there are penalty provisions for failing to comply with AHERA. A school district, for example, can be fined \$5,000 a day per building for improper inspection or up to \$25,000 for failing

to provide asbestos records upon request or refusing to let the EPA inspect the buildings.

Britton, a former University of Texas professor who has 14 years' experience in microbiology and biochemistry, said asbestos becomes potentially dangerous when it is crushed, releasing fibers into the air that may be inhaled.

Special equipment and skilled workers run up the tab for removing asbestos.

"You just can't get somebody off the street to go in and do that type of thing," Britton said.

Word of AHERA was passed to the schools by the EPA; Texas Education Agency; private school organizations; insurers; the Health Department, which has conducted numerous seminars; and asbestos consultants.

"These consultants are looking for the schools. It's not so much the schools having to look for them," Lauderdale said.

The health officials, as well as Britton, expressed concern about schools being careful in selecting building inspectors, asbestos analysts and companies to remove materials.

"Schools do not want to be on a waiting list, so they might be tempted to go with a company that has less experience," Lauderdale said.

DALLAS (AP) — Doctors are using a procedure, developed in Siberia 37 years ago for mending limbs of World War II casualties, to lengthen too-short arms and legs of patients in this country.

The technique, developed in 1951 by Soviet physician Gabriel Ilizarov, didn't reach the United States until 1981, Richard Treharne, a bioengineer, said.

Treharne is employed by Richards Medical Co. in Memphis, Tenn., a company which markets equipment used for the procedure.

The Ilizarov method stretches bones shortened by amputation, polio, complicated fractures or congenital abnormalities such as dwarfism.

Through a 1- or 2-inch incision, an orthopedic surgeon cuts the outer layer of the bone to be

stretched, leaving the blood supply undisturbed.

Pins as slim as bicycle spokes connect the bone to hoops that surround the exterior of the limb and the hoops are attached to each other by long screws.

The patients actually do some of the work themselves, lengthening the screws a tiny fraction of an inch each day by turning nuts on the end of them with a wrench. They check in with their doctors about once a week.

As the bone cut heals, it is pulled apart slightly, stretching the tissue and stimulating the production of more bone.

Practitioners say the proper growth rate is about an inch every 10 weeks.

Treharne said in some cases bones have been stretched up to 10 inches and even changed growth direction.

Aggievision

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hired five people in April solely for editing purposes.

Peter Hughes, a senior English major and a former Aggievision staff member, was fired by Keith.

Hughes said he was fired because of personal problems, not because of the quality of his work.

"Greg told me that being fired had nothing to do with the work I did for the project," Hughes said. "He (Keith) said it was a personality conflict — (it was) because of my attitude."

Keith confirmed Hughes' comments.

Cheryl Clements, a May journalism graduate and a member of the first video yearbook staff, said all staff members of the first video yearbook were journalism majors with broadcast experience who had worked for either KBTX or KAMU. She said the staff that Keith hired for Aggievision was inexperienced and unqualified.

Keith said he received only 20 applications for staff positions. Some of these, he said, did not even know what they were applying for, and some of the people's applications

were not well prepared.

"There wasn't a bunch of enthusiasm; we didn't get tons of applications," he said. "You do the best you can with what you get. You don't say only this many people applied so cancel the project. You do the best you can with those who applied. I think I did that."

Despite past problems, the board is committed to the success of the A&M video yearbook.

Davenport said this year's staff has done a fairly good job, but better work is possible in the future if the board can find people who are not afraid of the job.

Starr and Johnson both feel that Cheryl Pratt, a senior journalism major and producer of the 1988-89 video yearbook, was a good choice for the position.

Pratt has worked for two years at KAMU and has taken most of the courses offered in journalism and broadcasting. She also has done a lot of freelance work for companies in Bryan-College Station and has been involved in the pre-planning and production of KAMU talk shows.

Pratt said Aggievision had so many problems this year mainly because of lack of organization.

"The staff didn't go into the pro-

ject with any kind of organized plan and they relied on themselves too much," she said. "I plan to do a lot of 'pre-planning' before I begin the project and I won't hesitate to get help from others if I need it. It's very important to realize when you need to get some technical help."

Keith said he thinks next year's project will move much more smoothly considering the amount of experience that the new producer has. He believes, however, that the new staff should have a very involved adviser.

"They need someone from the department or from KAMU that

knows about video," he said. "It's very hard working with people like Don Johnson who look at everything from a print perspective."

After post-production is complete, the board will review the final product to determine whether or not the project should be continued next year, Starr said.

"If this year's product really stinks then it'll (the video yearbook) probably get killed by the board, but if it doesn't then it'll get another year," he said. "The board will be looking at the sales volume to help determine if the project is abandoned or not."

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