INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE WALK-THROUGH REPORT

PLANT NAME: Pioneer Talc Company, Inc.

LOCATION: Allamore, Texas

PURPOSE: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in cooperation with the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA) has underway a preliminary study of the talc mining and milling industry. As part of this study, NIOSH is conducting walk-through surveys to compile necessary data in an effort to characterize talc composition in the U.S.

NIOSH PERSONNEL: Paul L. Johnson

PLANT HISTORY AND PROCESS:

The Pioneer Talc Company, located 10 miles west of Van Horn, Texas, started operation in 1959 as a subsidiary of the Glen Ray Corporation (Chatsworth, Georgia). There are 22 workers employed during the two, twelve hour shifts. There are three mines serving this facility, Texola, Dees, and Garren Pink, with ore from each mine being similarly ground and processed.

Stockpiled ore, following a primary crushing process, is fed to two mills - a 5 roll Raymond Mill, used for milling light colored materials (99% minus 200 to 99% minus 325 mesh sizes), and a 3 roll Raymond which grinds 98 to 99% minus 100 to 200 mesh materials. Attached to each Raymond mill are air classifiers and cyclones vented through baghouse collectors. All "fine" ground materials are bagged in 50 lb. bags. The course grinds are also shipped in bulk hopper cars. Product shipments are made to Uvalde, and Hurst, Texas and Three Port, Louisiana, to be used for paint, ceramics, asphalt, and roofing materials.

HEALTH HAZARDS: Include potentially excessive dust and noise exposures.

PERSONNEL RECORDS:

All records include Social Security numbers and work histories. Records prior to 1968 can be located at Southern Talc Company, P.O. Drawer F, Chatsworth, Georgia 30705. Records from 1968 to present are kept at the Allamore, Texas facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Respirator protection for all employees working in dusty areas should be enforced.

2. The Willson Dust Guard filter #R670, 8D or DG8 is not adequate for controlling talc dust particles. It is recommended that NIOSH approved dust respirators be used during dusty operations.

3. Maintenance programs should be improved; dust collectors and leaking ducts need repairs.

4. Noise measurements should be made to determine worker exposure.

5. Housekeeping needs to be improved and maintained. Where possible a vacuum type system should be used rather than dry sweeping and shoveling.