

Fiber count low

By Rose Fitzpatrick

An analysis of air samples taken from the Bessey Hall office of UNL theater Professor William Morgan indicates that there are fewer asbestos fibers in the room than what may be found in downtown Lincoln.

The fiber count per cubic centimeter was .06, according to Edward Simpson, UNL director of Environmental Health and Safety. The federal limit is 2.0 per cubic centimeter, he said.

Wolfgang Brandner, Environmental Protection Agency regional asbestos coordinator, said that a reading of less than 2.0 does not mean the air is safe, just that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration standard for a workplace environment has not been violated.

It is unknown what amount of exposure to asbestos is unsafe, Brandner said. However, he said if the air sample was .06, he didn't think the room could be cleaned any better and that there is probably as many fibers in the downtown air.

Air sampling

Air sampling is a method of looking through a microscope and counting the fibers, he said.

Brandner said that until EPA receives better information, their position is that any exposure to asbestos could lead to health problems.

He said that OSHA has considered lowering the limit of exposure to asbestos from 2 fibers per cubic centimeter to .5 fibers per cubic centimeter in workplace environments.

The asbestos test at UNL was done because of a torn encasement of asbestos pipe lining found in Morgan's office.

The asbestos was removed by a private contractor. Removal can be dangerous if not done by dampening the asbestos to keep the asbestos fibers from spreading further.

The air samples were taken by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Dept. and sent to Denver to be analyzed.

Air samples taken

Simpson said the air samples were taken after the asbestos had been removed and the room was cleaned.

If the samples were taken before the removal was done, they would not signify the number of fibers in the room after removal.

Schrader said that asbestos pipe lining was also removed from the locker room at Schulte Field House. Air samples were not taken at the field house, he said.

Schrader said the insulation containing asbestos was taken dry from the field house. He said the work area was sealed in plastic and the workman removed the asbestos lining, and cleaned the area.

Schrader said no other buildings on campus were checked for exposed asbestos.

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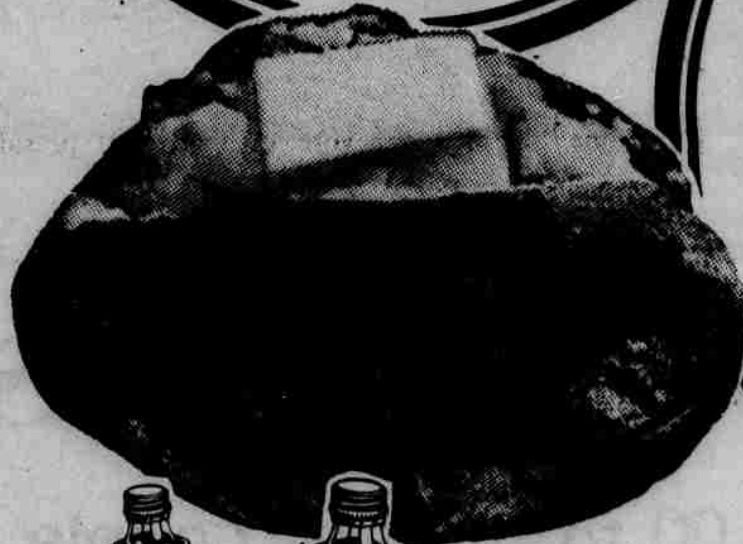
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