19651208 Dept of Health letter re considerable risk of lead poisoning from handling leaded sludge

H.—T. 45

In your reply quote reference
139/4

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

WELLINGTON

13 DEC 1965
WHANGAREI

Occupational Health Unit,
52-62 Riddiford Street,
WELLINGTON.

8 December 1965.

The Medical Officer of Health,
P.O. Box 137,
WHANGAREI.

DISPOSAL OF LEADED SLUDGE

I have received a minuted copy of a letter to you from Mr. Harcourt. It is essential that men working on this task shall be under adequate medical supervision as the risk of lead poisoning is considerable.

Organic lead compounds pass freely through the skin and produce a rather different symptom complex to inorganic lead poisoning. There is no rise in stipple cells and the earliest symptoms tend to be psychiatric in nature. The warning sign is considerable dreaming, usually of an unpleasant content.

Surveillance is through urine or blood leads and specimens should be sent to this laboratory for processing. For details of specimens, see form H.OH 6.

J.F. Copplestone.
For Director.
Division of Public Health.

MOH
S/I

8th December 1965 Letter on behalf of New Zealand Division of Public Health Director to the Medical Officer of Health to Director-General of Health noting that worker's exposure to leaded [petrol tank] sludge must be medically supervised, including blood or urine lead surveillance and that "The warning sign [of organic lead poisoning] is considerable dreaming, usually of an unpleasant content".