



Asbestos

Work continues on fiber-covered pipes

By Faris Cassel
Of the Emerald

Repairs of deteriorating asbestos pipe insulation in McArthur Court that were temporarily delayed late Tuesday afternoon pending results of air monitoring tests can be continued today, according to Ed Bailey, manager of the University's environmental health and safety office.

Work to repair the tattered pipe insulation began Monday after University officials confirmed that the insulation contained asbestos fibers, but was halted Tuesday afternoon until results from the air tests could be analyzed to determine whether it is safe to work in the area.

Bailey reconsidered late Tuesday his decision to wait for test results. He gave physical plant workers the OK to go ahead because he felt the procedures they were using to remove and contain the asbestos insulation were safe, he says.

Bailey says he originally decided to stop work and wait for the tests because of the likelihood of high concentrations of asbestos fibers being released into the air from the repair work.

"The insulation on the Mac Court pipes was so dry in some places that it actually broke up into dust in your hand," Bailey says.

In the past workers have come in from some asbestos jobs "covered from head to toe with dust," he says.

But workers in Mac Court are following safety procedures exactly as they are supposed to, Bailey says. The procedures include wetting down the insulation before removal and setting it carefully in plastic bags instead of knocking it off with a hammer.

Removing insulation this way has practically eliminated the risk of contaminating the air with



Photo by Bob Baker

Jerry Henry of the physical plant's sports services department removes pipe insulation made of asbestos from the south end of McArthur Court early Tuesday afternoon.

asbestos fibers, he says.

Still, the tests are being rushed through a state laboratory in Portland and will be available in several days, Bailey says.

The 1 1/4-inch thick steam pipe, which rings the playing area of Mac Court, is suspended from the ceiling above the lower balcony and the floor seats.

"If we have asbestos in an area that gets disturbance, then we should get to it right away," says physical plant director Harold Babcock.

If the test results show that the work is disturbing

the asbestos and creating unsafe levels of airborne fibers, it will be necessary to stop the project and contract the job off-campus, Babcock says.

"We have to keep the fibers from becoming airborne, because they will settle someplace else where they may be disturbed later," he says.

Additionally, a monitoring program has been scheduled by Bailey to determine the fiber level during different activities, including basketball games.

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Citations enhance awareness of asbestos danger

By Faris Cassel
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The discovery of tattered asbestos insulation in McArthur Court comes on the heels of a citation issued to the University for asbestos code violations this fall by the Accident Prevention Division of the state Workers' Compensation Department.

The citation is the the third asbestos-related citation the University has received since 1979.

The citations have contributed to a growing awareness on campus that asbestos is not a problem confined only to a small group of workers in the heating plant and tunnel system as previously assumed.

Asbestos — used extensively throughout the

University for pipe insulation — is made of microscopic fibers that have been known to cause disease and are believed to cause cancer when breathed into the lungs.

University officials say they are facing the task of upgrading a safety program that, while extensive, is not meeting its own standards.

This fall's citation — issued after an APD inspection — covered a wide range of campus health and safety violations and carried a fine of \$2,135, of which \$335 was for asbestos violations.

APD inspector Shawn Baz was checking a Science I storeroom when she heard banging on the steam pipes in adjacent tunnels, according to Ed Bailey, manager of the University's Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

Bailey says Baz found workers cutting through the asbestos insulation to make repairs and letting the debris fall in chunks instead of attempting to contain it.

Baz reported that the tunnel's entrance was littered with asbestos debris from prior maintenance and that the workers were inadequately trained and monitored for asbestos exposure levels. Some had not received the required medical examinations, she reported.

In the citation, Baz also noted that other physical plant workers were not adequately trained and monitored.

Baz says the inspections are not intended to be thorough surveys of the entire campus but are

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Suspect in Tylenol case surrenders to FBI

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A mechanic wanted for questioning in the Extra-Strength Tylenol poisoning deaths was arrested Tuesday in Los Angeles after he contacted FBI agents voluntarily, authorities said.

Kevin John Masterson, 35, walked into the FBI office in West Los Angeles on Monday afternoon and said he was willing to be interviewed about the Chicago-area poisonings, said FBI spokesman John Hoos.

Masterson was questioned, detained overnight, then turned over to Los Angeles police, who arrested him Tuesday at FBI headquarters on an outstanding warrant from Illinois on an unrelated matter, Hoos said.

Authorities who searched Masterson's rooms in Chicago in October found two

Tylenol capsules and two bottles labeled poison. Investigators have also suggested that Masterson had a grudge against two of the retail outlets where the poisoned Tylenol was purchased.

Hoos said he did not know why Masterson came to the FBI office, nor would he comment on what Masterson said during interviews.

"We interviewed him as a possible suspect in the Tylenol case," Hoos said. Asked whether Masterson was still considered crucial to the Tylenol case, Hoos said: "All I can say is there are no federal charges against him."

Masterson was held without bail on an outstanding warrant for possession of marijuana and was scheduled for arraignment on that charge Wednesday, said police Lt. Keith Ross.

Authorities in Du Page County, Ill., had issued an all-points bulletin for Masterson's arrest on the marijuana charge, but he was wanted primarily for questioning in the Tylenol case.

Masterson could waive extradition and be returned within 10 days. If he does not waive, extradition could take as long as 90 days, Ross said.

Seven people in the Chicago area died between Sept. 29 and Oct. 1 after taking Extra-Strength Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide.

The deaths touched off a massive hunt for the killer.

In an affidavit filed when a search warrant was obtained for Masterson's home, Chicago investigators said that Masterson and his wife Joann had once sued the Jewel Food Stores claiming she

was manhandled by employees in an alleged shoplifting incident.

The suit was settled out of court, but investigators said Masterson, who worked both as a mechanic and as a stained glass artisan, held a grudge against the store.

The other retail outlet against which Masterson held a grudge was identified in the affidavit as Frank's Finer Foods, but the document did not elaborate the reason for Masterson's resentment.

The affidavit also detailed a conversation with a clinical psychiatrist in which Masterson was quoted as saying "many people will suffer" because of his grudge against Jewel. Masterson also reportedly said that "Son of Sam (a notorious New York multiple-murder case) will pale by comparison."