SPAID THE SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ASBESTOSIS AND INDUSTRIAL DISEASES
(Registered Charity No. 276995)

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FROM THE SECRETARY

Sir Richard Doll,
Imperial Cancer Research Fund,
Gibson Building,
The Radcliffe Infirmary,
Oxford
OX2 6HE

30 April, 1985.

Dear Sir Richard,

Asbestos in Brake Linings

At your Press Conference to launch "Asbestos: Effects on health of exposure to asbestos", you reported that there is no risk from asbestos in brake linings, because the heat of braking 'denatures' the asbestos and renders it harmless. Your opinion was reported in the Times for 25 April 1985.

This is also the view of the Asbestos Information Committee whose leaflet "Is Brake Lining Dust Harmful?" (copy attached) includes: "Considerable heat is generated in braking and at high temperatures asbestos is converted into an amorphous material which is no longer asbestos."

However, we find that normal operation of brakes in passenger cars is reported to generate temperatures in the range 150°C to 250°C, while for all types of asbestos, thermal degradation, i.e. the approximate temperature at which the material will begin to decompose, is reported as 600°C - 800°C.

This information is reported by A.A.Hodgson who has worked with Dr. Holmes of TBA Rochdale on measurements of asbestos in buildings.

Also, investigations to ascertain whether or not chrysotile fibres can survive high temperatures generated during braking, identified chrysotile asbestos fibres in all of 39 samples of dust from brake drums - 10 collected in New York and 29 from Great Britain, West Germany, France, Finland and Western Australia. (Rohl et al 1977)

I should be most grateful if you would let me have the evidence which leads you to describe dust released by braking cars as harmless.

Yours sincerely
Nancy Tait.

Nancy Tait,
Churchill Fellow, 1976.

Secretary Nancy Tait Churchill Fellow 1976 38 Drapers Road Enfield Middx. EN2 8LU