

SMOKING

BY HARRY F. ROSENTHAL

Fyl- Scott

WASHINGTON (AP) -- PEOPLE WHO SMOKE CIGARETTES ARE 50 PERCENT MORE LIKELY TO NEED HEALTH CARE THAN NON-SMOKERS AND PROBABLY COST THEIR EMPLOYERS \$200 TO \$500 MORE EACH YEAR, THE SURGEON GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORT ON SMOKING SAID TODAY.

MOREOVER, IT SAID, STUDIES SHOW SMOKERS HAVE MORE ACCIDENTS ON THE JOB, RECEIVE MORE DISABILITY PAYMENTS, AND ARE ABSENT MORE OFTEN THAN THEIR NON-SMOKING COLLEAGUES.

THIS YEAR'S REPORT, THE 17TH IN THE SERIES, FOCUSES ON SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE. DR. C. EVERETT KOOP, THE SURGEON GENERAL, SAID A MAJOR CONCLUSION IS THAT CIGARETTE SMOKING REPRESENTS, FOR THE MAJORITY OF AMERICAN WORKERS, "A GREATER CAUSE OF DEATH AND DISABILITY THAN THEIR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT."

IT FINDS ALSO THAT RISKS ARE REDUCED FOR INDIVIDUAL WORKERS IN PLACES WHERE SMOKING IS CONTROLLED AND EXPOSURE TO SMOKE IS REDUCED.

CANCER AND CHRONIC LUNG DISEASES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER OF ALL DEATHS EACH YEAR, KOOP SAID, WITH 10 MILLION AMERICANS SUFFERING FROM CHRONIC LUNG DISEASE.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE EXPOSED TO SUCH CANCER-CAUSING MATERIALS AS ASBESTOS OR COAL DUST AT WORK, SMOKING CAN CREATE MORE DISEASE THAN THE SUM OF THE SEPARATE EXPOSURES, THE REPORT SAID.

"WE KNOW THAT IN NON-ASBESTOS-EXPOSED POPULATIONS, SMOKING INCREASES THE LUNG CANCER RISK APPROXIMATELY TENFOLD," KOOP SAID. "THE RISK IS INCREASED MORE THAN FIFTYFOLD IF THE ASBESTOS WORKERS ALSO SMOKE.

"IN OTHER WORDS, FOR THOSE WORKERS WHO BOTH SMOKE AND ARE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS, THE RISK OF DEVELOPING AND DYING FROM LUNG CANCER IS 5,000 PERCENT GREATER THAN THE RISK FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO NEITHER SMOKE NOR ARE EXPOSED."

THE AFL-CIO WAS SEVERELY CRITICAL OF THE REPORT, SAYING IT WILL SERIOUSLY SET BACK EFFORTS TO PROTECT AMERICAN WORKERS' HEALTH.

"THE REPORT MINIMIZES AND MISREPRESENTS THE RISKS POSED BY OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS, AND SUGGESTS THAT IF WORKERS STOP SMOKING THEY WILL ELIMINATE THE RISK OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE," THE LABOR ORGANIZATION SAID. "IN FACT, THE WAY TO ELIMINATE OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE IS BY REDUCING WORKPLACE HAZARDS."

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THE AFL-CIO SAID THE REPORT IS "FILLED WITH GLARING INACCURACIES" AND OFFERS NO NEW SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AND OMITTS IMPORTANT FACTS ON THE RISKS OF MANY OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS.

BUT KOOP, AT A NEWS CONFERENCE TODAY, SAID THE LABOR FEDERATION

MISINTERPRETED THE REPORT.