Asbestos is an example of a substance that can result in chronic health effects. Asbestos fibers enter the body through inhalation of airborne asbestos particles and can become embedded in the tissues of the respiratory or digestive systems. Diseases associated with asbestos exposure often do not manifest themselves for 25-35 years following the start of exposure. The risk of disease is significantly increased when both asbestos exposure and smoking occurs.

Most acid gases exhibit only acute health effects. Exposure to acid gases can be extremely irritating, causing a sore throat, coughing and tearing of the eyes. However, once exposure stops, the effects generally pass with no lasting results. The exposure limits are designed to eliminate both short- and long-term symptoms.

Information on a particular chemical (or mixture of chemicals) can be found on the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDSs) for that chemical. This gives the trade name, manufacturer, chemical components, exposure limits, effects of exposure, precautions to follow, as well as data on the vapor pressure, flammability, etc., and other physical data.

If you wish to know about a specific chemical you work with, talk to your Superintendent/Manager, review the MSDSs and discuss the procedures for handling the chemical established by your Elevator Company. Fortunately, most chemicals used in the elevator industry are of low toxicity, but like any chemical, must be used correctly to avoid hazardous conditions.

14.2 Oils and Grease

OSHA has established an exposure limit of 5 milligrams per cubic meter (mg/m^3) for oil mist in air. In the elevator industry, exposure results from physically handling the oil. Airborne exposures are virtually nonexistent. The biggest potential hazard results from contact with the oil (especially used oil) on the