

PG&E**FOR INTRA - COMPANY USES**

From Division or Department SR. VICE PRESIDENT-PERSONNEL
To Division or Department 722.1
FILE NO.
RE: LETTER OF AIDS Policy
SUBJECT

January 31, 1986

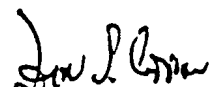
TO ALL COMPANY SUPERVISORS:

Many questions have recently been raised regarding the Company's position concerning employees who may have acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Based upon extensive research into the subject and consultation with health experts in this field, the Company's position is that employees afflicted with AIDS do not present a health risk to other employees in the work place under normal working conditions. Employees with AIDS are entitled to the same working conditions as others. This includes meeting the Company's performance requirements for their assigned positions with the normal assistance of their supervisors and coworkers, and coverage under the Company's various support and benefit programs, if eligible.

Many of you may have learned AIDS is a blood borne, sexually transmitted disease that is not spread by casual contact. Current medical statistics reveal that about 15,500 AIDS cases have been diagnosed thus far within the United States, and educated predictions suggest the number of cases will dramatically increase.

In the last two years, several PGandE employees have contracted or died of AIDS. As with the untimely death of any employee, the Company recognizes the sense of loss this tragedy brings to family, friends, and coworkers. PGandE supervisors and employees should be prepared to approach the AIDS issue, as it relates to the Company work settings, with accurate information and not with unjustified fear or ignorance. The most recent and accurate information about AIDS has been developed for your education and information. These materials, which are attached to this letter, should familiarize you with current medical information on AIDS. We are also developing training materials, including a videotape, which you can use to provide more information about AIDS to your employees.

Please review the attached materials thoroughly. While medical information about AIDS is constantly changing, we have endeavored to provide you with the most up-to-date information and will supplement that information when any significant new information is developed.


JOHN S. COOPER

HSPitner(4433):cef

Attachments

PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY
POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES ON
AIDS IN THE WORKPLACE

In keeping with two of our corporate objectives to ensure a safe, healthy work environment for our employees and the public we serve, and to prohibit all forms of arbitrary discrimination in employment, we have developed the following policy statement and guidelines on how to handle personnel matters related to employees afflicted with AIDS. The policy statement and guidelines are based on the most current medical information on this subject available. If any significant medical developments occur, we will revise the statement and these guidelines accordingly.

Policy Statement

It is PGandE's position that employees afflicted with AIDS do not present a health risk to other employees in the workplace under normal working conditions. Employees with AIDS are subject to the same working conditions and performance requirements as any other employee. However, if there is supervisory concern that an employee with AIDS is not able to perform assigned duties, a medical clarification examination may be required to determine the employee's fitness for work. Lastly, employees with AIDS, provided that they are otherwise eligible, are entitled to coverage under the Company's sick leave, medical leave of absence, disability benefits, and equal employment opportunity policies.

Guidelines

1. Employees afflicted with AIDS should be treated the same as any other Company employee. However, if their medical or physical condition affects their ability to perform their assigned duties, they should be treated as any other employee who has a disability that prevents them performing the duties of their job.
2. If a supervisor has a reasonable basis to believe that an employee with AIDS is unable to perform the duties of their position, the supervisor may request the employee undergo a medical clarification examination. The results of the medical clarification examination shall guide future personnel decisions affecting the employee.
3. Employees afflicted with AIDS, to the extent they are otherwise eligible, are entitled to coverage under the Company's sick leave, medical leave of absence, disability benefits, and equal employment opportunity policies. When requested, supervisors and personnel department representatives should furnish information regarding those policies to affected employees.
4. If employees who share the same work environment with an employee with AIDS express concerns over their personal safety and health, supervisors must explain that, based on guidelines issued by the United States Public Health Service and expert medical opinions, casual contact with a coworker with AIDS poses no threat of transmission. If necessary, supervisors should contact an appropriate Employee Assistance Program counselor to arrange for more comprehensive educational efforts for the work force.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT AIDS

What is "AIDS"?

"AIDS" stands for "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome," a disease first recognized by the medical profession in 1981. AIDS is caused by a virus, commonly known as HTLV-III (human T-lymphotropic virus type III), which infects and destroys T-helper lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell which maintains a person's immune system. By destroying T-helper lymphocytes, the HTLV-III virus causes a severe suppression of the affected person's immune system, thereby leaving that person vulnerable to a variety of opportunistic infections and malignancies. Some of the opportunistic illnesses which a person afflicted with AIDS may suffer include Kaposi's Sarcoma (a rare form of skin cancer) and Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (also a usually rare illness). There is currently no known cure for AIDS.

How is AIDS transmitted?

Current medical information establishes that the transmission of AIDS has occurred only through the exchange of blood, blood products, or semen, between individuals. The exchange of those specified bodily fluids is normally associated with sexual intercourse, blood transfusion, and sharing of hypodermic needles by intravenous drug users. No evidence exists to indicate that the AIDS virus can be transmitted by the types of casual person-to-person contact that takes place within the household, school, or work environment.

The AIDS virus has also been found in bodily fluids such as saliva, urine, and tears. However, there has been no case reported where those fluids have been found to transmit the AIDS virus from one person to another.

How widespread is the AIDS disease?

As an initial point of clarification, federal guidelines basically specify that an individual must suffer from one of the opportunistic infections or malignancies which normally afflict AIDS patients before an AIDS diagnosis is made. Based on those guidelines, as of the end of 1985 there were 15,500 reported cases of AIDS nationwide. Almost one-third of those cases were reported during the first nine months of 1985. Based on current trends, the number of AIDS cases can be expected to double over the next twelve months. About 7,000 AIDS patients have died since their diagnosis, and approximately 80 percent of those deaths occurred within two years of the diagnosis.

Medical statistics compiled thus far also reveal that, for every patient diagnosed with AIDS, perhaps five to ten individuals suffer from milder forms of the disease called AIDS-Related Complex (ARC). Some of the symptoms of ARC patients are generalized swelling of lymph nodes, unexplained weight loss, unexplained fevers, and a general feeling of ill health. It is unclear at this time whether ARC patients will eventually develop AIDS or whether they will continue to suffer from their current symptoms as a milder variant of AIDS.

Is it safe to work with AIDS patients?

Based on guidelines issued by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) on November 14, 1985, and several studies conducted by medical experts in this field, the answer is yes. Specifically, the USPHS guidelines make the following points regarding this issue:

- No known risk of transmission to coworkers, clients, or consumers exists from individuals with AIDS in work settings such as offices, schools, factories, and construction sites.
- AIDS infection is spread by sexual contact with infected persons, injection of contaminated blood or blood products, and by prenatal transmission.
- Workers with AIDS should not be restricted from work solely because they suffer from AIDS. Moreover, they should not be prohibited from using telephones, office equipment, toilets, showers, eating facilities, and water fountains.