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Letters

Leukemia link 'weak'

The proposed link between the incidence of leukemia and exposure to high electric and magnetic fields would appear to be a weak one indeed ("More on leukemia and electrical workers," SN: 4/27/85, p. 271). None of the occupations examined seems to involve exposure to either high electric or magnetic fields. However, all occupations studied — electronic equipment assemblers, radio and television repairers and amateur radio operators — may well be exposed to various chemicals such as those occurring in solder flux smoke and in solvents (such as trichlorotrifluoroethane) used to clean electronic parts.

Other occupations and residential situations (living under or near a high-voltage transmission line or near a transmitter, for example) could well involve exposure to higher and more continuously high field strengths than those mentioned. Really high magnetic field strength

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Cover: Although the sounds of chemical compounds are not yet featured on television quiz shows, infrared spectra translated into musical notes are being tried in at least one laboratory to help blind students identify unknown substances. Researchers elsewhere are also experimenting with the use of sound to represent statistical data for classifying objects or identifying trends. (Illustration: Robert Bourdeaux)



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exposure is probably rare outside of magnetics laboratories.

Willard D. Coles
Fairview Park, Ohio

How does the radio amateur, who transmits only in his spare time, receive more radiation than the policeman or taxi driver who is transmitting intermittently throughout the entire working day? The electrician who installs wiring in a new home works only on dead circuits; meanwhile, the carpenter who does the actual building is holding an operating motor, his saw, right in his hand much of the day. As for the TV repairman, he does run sets, as a mechanic runs engines, to test them. But meanwhile, in the average American home, television runs seven hours per day.

If actual exposure were studied, it might be concluded that staying home is the most hazardous occupation of all. For the magnetic

field near a hair dryer is a whopping 10 gauss! And the electric field near an electric blanket is a whopping 250 V/m!

Warner Clements
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Dangling naturalist

It was quite delightful to find a picture on your April 13 cover of my uncle dangling on a high swing, with camera in hand ("S. H. Chubb: Capturing the Beauty of Bones in Motion"). I will add it to the "family archives."

Virginia Duffy McLoughlin
Providence, R.I.

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Please limit letters to 250 words.

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