UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO

In re: Asbestos Litigation	)	
	)	
Interim Order Authorizing	)	OAL Order No. 164
the Clerk of Court to Require	)	
Electronic Filing for all	)	
Maritime Asbestos Cases	)	
Filed January 2, 1996 or later	)	
	)	
Introductory Sessions Set for	)	
January 9 at 1 p.m. and	)	
January 10 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.	)	

This interim order authorizes the Northern District of Ohio Clerk of Court to establish procedures requiring that all documents related to the main body of the maritime asbestos litigation be filed with the Court electronically over the Internet. This extraordinary action is being taken to adequately address the overwhelming number of asbestos cases and asbestos pleadings filed in this Court. Currently, there are over 17,000 asbestos cases pending in the Northern District of Ohio with approximately 500,000 pleadings being filed each year. Utilization of electronic filing should provide better service to the litigants and substantial savings to the Court.

This order shall pertain only to maritime asbestos cases in which the original complaint is filed by the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm on or after January 2, 1996. This order is interim in nature because it is anticipated that superseding orders or local rules may eventually be adopted governing electronic filing. The Clerk is hereby authorized to implement the experimental electronic filing system developed by the Technology Enhancement Office of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts in conjunction with the Clerk's Office and previously presented to and currently being tested by counsel in the maritime asbestos litigation.

Members of the Technology Enhancement Office will provide an introduction on the use of the system on the following dates: January 9, 1996 at 1 p.m. and January 10, 1996 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The introductory sessions will be conducted in room 301 of the U.S. Courthouse in Cleveland, Ohio. Individuals may attend whichever session is most convenient. Firms are encouraged to have the individual primarily responsible for electronic filing (attorney, paralegal or automation specialist) attend.

Pursuant to this order:

1. Documents in cases in which the original complaint is filed by the Jaques Admiralty Law Firm on or after January 2, 1996 shall be filed with the Court electronically, rather than on paper.

2. The user identification number and the user password required to submit documents over the system shall serve as a substitute for the attorney's signature on all electronic documents filed with the Court until further notice.

The maritime asbestos electronic filing system is expected to provide substantial time and cost savings to both the Court and the litigants. To realize the full benefits of electronic filing, it is necessary that all parties participate. It is recognized, however, that in extreme cases some firms may be unable to obtain the automation resources necessary to participate in electronic filing. Litigants who are unable to file and receive documents electronically must provide the Clerk of Court with a written statement of the reasons why they are unable to participate for the Court's consideration.

To utilize the electronic filing system, firms need hardware, software and an Internet connection as specified in the October 13, 1995 notice sent by the Clerk of Court to all firms involved in the maritime asbestos litigation. Those requirements are briefly summarized in **Attachment A**.

It is important that, as soon as possible, all firms become familiar with the system and the way in which documents must be composed and formatted for filing and establish their ability to connect with the system via the Internet. It is expected that most defendant firms will need to make their initial electronic filings in the latter part of January, 1996. In order to use the system, all counsel will also need to complete and return to the Clerk of Court the Interim Attorney Registration Form provided as **Attachment B** if they have not already done so. **Attachment C** provides a list of events or documents that the current version of the system is now able to accept.

It is so ordered.

George W. White
Chief Judge

AT CLEVELAND, OHIO
December 19, 1995