BTMED news

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Four Sites Added to Building Trades National Medical Screening Program

Three Additional Sites Coming in 2007

Former construction workers who worked at Rocky Flats in Colo., Brookhaven National Laboratory in N.Y., and Mallinckrodt and Weldon Spring in Mo., now have access to the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed).

In January 2007, the program will expand to include construction workers from the Battelle Laboratories–King Avenue and West Jefferson sites both located in Columbus, Ohio, as well as the Brush Luckey Site, located in Luckey, Ohio.

The screening consists of two steps, a work history interview and a medical exam. In step one, a specially trained building trades worker or work site expert conducts a work history interview to determine what exposures to hazardous material the former worker may have had and the types of illnesses that could result. In step two, former workers receive a free medical screening examination to test for illnesses that may have developed from exposure risks, as well as other health problems. Following the exam, the participant receives a letter indicating any medical findings and indicates which findings could be work related.

"Many BTMed participants have discovered illnesses they would not have known were present."

Many BTMed participants have discovered illnesses they would not have known were present and then gained access to government-funded benefits to treat those problems relating to their work at DOE sites. The screening program has enabled many workers to file a claim with the U.S. Department of Labor under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). The EEOICPA offers workers medical coverage for the illness from the date the claim was filed and a compensation lump-sum payment. The BTMed program will assist workers with referral for additional medical care, if required, but does not pay for such care. In addition, the program will assist participants who want to file claims for workers' compensation for any work-related problem.

Construction workers who were employed at Rocky Flats and Brookhaven sites can go to BTMED outreach offices where work history interviews are conducted in person or online at www.btmed.org. Outreach offices, which are not far from the actual DOE sites, are staffed by people ready to help former workers: Dwayne Adkins (303-744-6169, ext. 11) operates the Rocky Flats office and Angela DeVito (631-813-2725) operates the Brookhaven office. For construction workers who worked at Mallinckrodt and Weldon Spring, experienced interviewers will conduct telephone interviews.

Activities to let former workers know about the outreach program have been effective. From June through August of 2006, more than 1,800 workers were preauthorized for the screening.

"I highly recommend the medical screening just to find out if anything is wrong—even if you're afraid to find out. A co-worker asked me why I would want to know. I think it's important to know when there is something wrong."

Susan Stanfill, IBEW Local 124,
Kansas City Plant

"The Medical Screening Program is a program we can't afford not to be a part of. It's a first-class operation. We do whatever it takes to get our members involved because it helps them avoid health risks down the road."

Willie Koester,
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 392
Business Manager, Fernald

"The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program's concerns and diligence are appreciated for the future well-being of our members and retirees."

Dennis Stoltz, IBEW Local 68
Business Manager, Rocky Flats

"I think the program is terrific. The physical exam worked out well since they fit it into my work schedule. It's important for a middle-aged man like me to find out if anything is wrong."

William A. Ferris, IUOE Local 138
and Laborers 1298, Brookhaven

"The doctor was very thorough and the people are so friendly. It was a very comfortable experience. I never felt that way in a doctor's office before."

James V. Cunningham Sr.,
Ironworkers Local 361, Brookhaven

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT WWW.BTMED.ORG.

Has It Been Three Years Since Your Initial Medical Screening Exam?

If yes, you may be eligible for another screening exam.

Re-screening is important to detect possible health problems that may have developed since your first medical screening. A change in test results is one of the best clues doctors can use to assess your health status. It's important that eligible participants take advantage of the re-screening exam.

Re-screening exams are currently being offered to workers from Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge and Amchitka. In the spring of 2007, re-screens will be offered to Portsmouth and Paducah workers.

If you are a former construction worker who has participated in the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program at any one of the six previously mentioned DOE sites, please contact 1-800-866-9663 about setting up a re-screening.

Covered DOE Sites

DOE Site	New Site?	Site Location	Outreach Office Location
Amchitka Test Site	No	Alaska	Anchorage
Battelle Laboratories West Jefferson (DOE 1986–PRESENT)	Yes	Ohio	TBD
Battelle Laboratories King Avenue (DOE 1986–2000)	Yes	Ohio	TBD
Brookhaven National Laboratory	Yes	New York	Long Island
Brush Luckey Plant (DOE 1949–1961; 1992–PRESENT)	Yes	Ohio	TBD
Fernald	No	Ohio	Cincinnati
Hanford	No	Washington	Pasco
Idaho National Laboratory	No	Idaho	Pocatello
Kansas City Plant	No	Missouri	Kansas City
Mallinckrodt	Yes	Missouri	Seattle (Main Office)
Mound	No	Ohio	Dayton
Oak Ridge (K-25, Y-12, X-10)	No	Tennessee	Oak Ridge
Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant	No	Kentucky	Paducah
Pinellas	No	Florida	Seattle (Main Office)
Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant	No	Ohio	Portsmouth
Rocky Flats	Yes	Colorado	Lakewood
Savannah River Site	No	South Carolina	Augusta
Weldon Springs	Yes	Missouri	Seattle (Main Office)

How the Building Trades Medical Screening Works...

The BTMed program is easy to access and free.

- Register for the program (see below) and sign a consent form.
- You will be scheduled to have a work history interview that can be done either in person, over the phone, or on the web.
- BTMed medical staff will review your work history interview to determine possible exposures related to your work at the DOE site.
- You will be contacted to schedule a free medical exam. The medical exam is a physical exam and lab work that consists of:
  - Chest X-Ray (Tests for asbestosis, silica, and lung cancer)
  - Hearing Test
  - Blood Test, such as:
    - BeLPT–Tests for beryllium
    - CBC–Tests for blood abnormalities such as leukemia
    - General Health Assessment–Tests functions of the liver, kidney, and thyroid; tests for diabetes and high cholesterol)
    - Tests for heavy metals such as lead
  - Fecal Occult–Tests for colon cancer
  - Visual assessment of skin for any possible skin cancer
  - Spirometry–Tests lung function
- Critical findings will be reported to you for immediate follow-up.

Call today for more information: 1-800-866-9663 or go online at www.btmed.org.

Building Trades Outreach Office Locations and Staff

Amchitka
Contact:
John Fletcher
1-888-827-6772

Brookhaven
Contact:
Angela De Vito
631-813-2725

Fernald
Contact:
Lou Doll
513-681-0864

Hanford
Contact:
Sherry Gosseen
509-542-9347

Idaho National Laboratory (INEEL)
Contact:
Dan Obray
208-233-4611

Kansas City Plant
Contact:
J.J. Jones
816-333-3020

Mound
Contact:
TBN
937-222-8920

Oak Ridge
Contact:
Kim Cranford
1-888-464-0009

Paducah
Contact:
Joe Hudson
270-443-2850

Portsmouth
Contact:
Ron Bush
740-353-8808

Rocky Flats
Contact:
Dwayne Adkins
303-744-6169 ext.11

Savannah River Site
Contact:
Charles Jernigan
706-722-7272

For Pinellas, Mallinckrodt, and Weldon Springs call Toll Free 1-800-866-9663

Beryllium Exposure—Know the Risks

Exposure to beryllium, a metal used to make reactor and bomb components, can lead to disabling lung disease. Unfortunately, construction workers at many DOE sites have been exposed to beryllium dust.

The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program became the first organization to discover that construction workers are at risk for work-related beryllium disease.

Although construction workers may not have been directly involved in manufacturing processes involving beryllium, they frequently worked in the same buildings performing maintenance, repair, renovation, demolition, clean-up, and other activities that, even after beryllium was no longer used, could disturb beryllium dust. Exposures may have occurred during the use of spark resistant tools, which contain beryllium; these tools also caused beryllium dust to settle in tool chests and tool rooms.

Most construction workers who worked on DOE facilities do not know if they have been exposed to beryllium because they were not told about the possibility of being exposed.

Beryllium causes two different types of medical problems: beryllium sensitization and chronic beryllium disease (CBD). Sensitization affects only some people who have a special pre-disposition to beryllium. CBD is a serious and progressive lung disease which eventually results in significant disability in most cases. Typically, a person progresses from sensitization to CBD, but not all sensitized people develop CBD. Many construction workers who have been diagnosed with beryllium sensitization have not developed CBD and its associated significant disabilities.

Either type of beryllium disease occurs as a result of workers inhaling beryllium dust or fumes. Sensitization also can result from skin contact with beryllium. There is no pinpointed amount that can cause a worker to acquire the disease, meaning that each individual has a different level of resistance to the disease. Workers are often unaware of the disease during the early stages. But as the disease progresses, affected workers experience symptoms that include coughing, shortness of breath, fatigue, weight lost/loss of appetite, fevers and night sweats.

Beryllium sensitization is detected with a blood test called the Beryllium-Lymphocyte Proliferation Test (Be-LPT). Further medical tests are necessary to confirm or rule out CBD. Under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOCIPA), workers who have been sensitized to beryllium are eligible for life-time medical evaluation for beryllium disease, including travel costs to and from a medical specialist. Workers diagnosed with CBD are also eligible for a cash payment of $150,000 along with lifetime coverage of medical costs for treatment.

To get more information about beryllium disease, contact your local BTMed outreach office or call 1-800-866-9663.

U.S. Department of Labor Provides Compensation to Nuclear Weapons Workers and Their Survivors

As of Oct. 11, 2006, the Department of Labor (DOL) had provided more than $2.1 billion in compensation to energy workers whose illnesses were linked to employment in the atomic weapons industry, and more than $125 million to cover the costs of necessary medical care for employees with illnesses.

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act (EEOICPA) contains two parts: Part B and Part E, each with distinct criteria for qualification under the Act.

For more information about the U.S. Department of Labor's Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, call toll free 1-866-888-3322, or visit DOL's website at: http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/owcp/eeoicp/main.htm.

BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER PART B OF THE EEOICPA

What is Part B?

Part B is a program for employees of DOE, and certain DOE contractors and subcontractors, who did work at facilities associated with the production of atomic weapons.

Who does Part B cover?

Coverage under Part B is limited to those covered employees who developed a radiogenic cancer, beryllium illness, or silicosis as a result of their employment. If an employee who would have qualified for Part B benefits is deceased, then qualified survivors may file a claim.

What benefits does Part B offer?

Eligible employees (and qualified survivors) under Part B may receive compensation in the amount of $150,000 and payment of medical benefits for the covered condition.

BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER PART E OF THE EEOICPA

What is Part E?

Part E of the EEOICPA provides federal compensation and medical benefits to employees of DOE contractors or subcontractors who developed an occupational illness as a result of exposure to toxic substances at a DOE facility.

What benefits does Part E offer?

Part E grants compensation based on a covered employee's level of impairment and/or years of qualifying wage loss, plus medical expenses related to the covered illness if the employee developed an illness because of exposure to toxic substances. Under Part E, the term "toxic substance" is not limited to radiation exposure, but includes other causal factors such as chemicals, biological substances, solvents, acids, and metals.

Worker with CBD Takes Optimistic Outlook

Fred Anderson Jr., who spent more than 16 years as an operating engineer at the Savannah River site, could be bitter, but he's not. He suffers from chronic beryllium disease (CBD), a disease he's now battling because of his exposure to beryllium while working at the Aiken, S.C., site. Because CBD does not allow for sufficient levels of oxygen in his bloodstream, Anderson is fatigued easily and the 54-year-old worker cannot hold down normal work hours.

Still, Anderson's outlook is unfailingly optimistic. "We're just thankful for every day we've got together," Anderson says, referring to his wife, Tina. "You can't just give up. The good Lord is in charge and he wants me to be here. When he wants to take me, he will."

"F Area" Savannah River site, one of many places Anderson worked.

Anderson is aware of his diagnosis because of the Building Trades National Medical Screening (BTMed) Program. He enrolled in the program in the summer of 2000 to participate in a free medical exam to determine if his work at Savannah River had affected his health. Unfortunately, his blood test results indicated that he had been exposed to beryllium, one of several substances screened for in the BTMed program. Beryllium is a naturally occurring metal used in making reactor and bomb components. General maintenance, repair, renovation or demolition could disturb beryllium dust, sending it into the air where workers inhale it.

As a member of Operating Engineers Local 470 for more than two decades, Anderson worked at the Savannah River site from 1981 until the mid-1990s when plant cutbacks resulted in layoffs. Anderson and his wife left the area for Iva, S.C., a small town about two hours from Augusta, where they still reside. It was not until years later that Anderson would come to realize how fortunate he was to have been laid off.

Prior to the BTMed testing, Anderson thought his fatigue was "laziness," which in no way reflects his work ethic: he had a near-perfect attendance record at the DOE site.

"It doesn't make you feel good," Anderson says of being exposed to a harmful substance without his knowledge. "They got all these people trusting them–I don't even know how I got it or what it even looks like."

After the BTMed tests showed evidence of beryllium in his system, he was sent to a specialist who confirmed Anderson's worst fears in early 2001–CBD, a disabling lung disease. He recalled receiving the diagnosis with a certain sadness that reflected his gut feeling that something was wrong.

But Anderson had a decision to make: how was the diagnosis going to affect his outlook on life. He settled upon a powerfully positive perspective that helps him live every day to the fullest. He decided, "Life is like poker–though I'm not much a poker player, you have to play the hand you're dealt."

Anderson quickly filed a claim under the EEOICPA for beryllium sensitivity and it covered the costs associated with any future medical evaluation for beryllium disease. He also was awarded the $150,000 payment compensated to former DOE construction workers with CBD.

While he admits that "thoughts of not doing what I've been doing make me sad," he lives every day as a truly grateful man. "It's up to me to make the best of what I've got. There are a lot of people in worse situations. I just leave it up to the Lord to make the final decision. Until then, I'm going to live every day the best I can." Without the Building Trades National Program, Anderson says he "would've kept wondering what was wrong."

Every former construction worker is encouraged to participate in the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program, even if there are no apparent health problems. To participate in the free screenings, please call toll-free: 1-800-866-9663 or 1-888-464-0009.

Were you a construction worker at a DOE site? If so, please read this.

Building Trades National Medical Screening Program
C/o The Center to Protect Workers' Rights
Edward C. Sullivan, President
Sean McGarvey, Secretary-Treasurer
8484 Georgia Ave., Suite 1000
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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