

THE BUFFALO NEWS

 PRINT THIS

Government allows more cancer claims from LOOW

By Aaron Besecker
NEWS NIAGARA REPORTER
November 09, 2009, 7:08 AM /

The federal government is making it easier for individuals who got cancer after working at a Niagara County nuclear site to receive compensation because of a lack of available data about exposure at the facility.

Workers at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, or their survivors, can make a claim for compensation if they had one of 22 types of cancer, under a recent decision by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

The move, which applies to individuals who worked there from 1944 through 1953, waives an aspect of the case review by the agency, called “dose reconstruction,” because of a lack of adequate data available about how much radiation workers may have been exposed to, agency spokeswoman Shannon Bradford said.

The move adds these workers over this time frame to a “special exposure cohort” — the same designation being sought for workers at the former Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna.

The designation for the former ordnance works workers took effect Oct. 29.

The former ordnance works site is currently the subject of an investigation of both chemical and radiological contamination by the Army Corps of Engineers.

So far, four cases previously submitted are being considered under the new designation, Bradford said. It was not immediately clear how many total cases may be eligible to qualify.

The Department of Labor runs the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, which became law in 2000. It benefits workers who developed debilitating or fatal diseases from work-related exposure to radioactive material during the Cold War.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reviews the cases of claimants who said they became ill because of radiation.

Workers, or their families, are eligible for payments of \$150,000 under the part of the program related to radiation exposure. The families of five former workers at this site have been paid a total of \$750,000 through Thursday

under the federal program, according to the Department of Labor's Web site.

Individuals must have worked at least 250 days at the site in order to qualify under both the old and the new guidelines. In addition to the 22 primary cancers, claims can be made if lung, bone or renal cancer also developed and the initial cancer was not among the 22 qualifying types. For a full list of the qualifying cancers, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/ocas/ocassec.html. Workers at the former ordnance works site and the Niagara Falls Storage Site already had the ability to make claims if they worked there between 1944 and 1997, according to the Department of Energy's Web site. Those who worked after 1953 and were affected by cancer will have to have their cases reviewed by NIOSH.

Previously denied claims may be reopened because of this change.

The Department of Labor has received compensation claims for about 150 former workers who became ill because of chemicals or radiation at the site, according to the agency's Web site.

There are 39 sites in the state whose former workers are eligible for compensation. There are 12 sites in Niagara and Erie counties.

For more information on the compensation program, contact the Department of Labor's Resource Center, located in Amherst, at 832-6200.

For more information about an existing claim undergoing dose reconstruction at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, call (877) 222-7570 or e-mailocas@cdc.gov.

abesecker@buffnews.com

Reader comments

Rate This
Article

There on this article.

Reader comments are posted immediately and are not edited. Users can help promote good discourse by using the "Inappropriate" links to vote down comments that fall outside of our guidelines. Comments that exceed our moderation threshold are automatically hidden and reviewed by an editor. Comments should be on topic; respectful of other writers; not be libelous, obscene, threatening, abusive, or otherwise offensive; and generally be in good taste. Users who repeatedly violate these guidelines will be banned. Comments containing objectionable words are automatically blocked. Some comments may be re-published in The Buffalo News print edition.



Log into MyBuffalo to post a comment

MyBuffalo user: Password:

Log In

[Forgot your password?](#)

What is MyBuffalo?

MyBuffalo is the new social network from Buffalo.com. Your MyBuffalo account lets you comment on and rate stories at buffalonews.com. You can also head over to mybuffalo.com to share your blog posts, stories, photos, and videos with the community. [Join now](#) or [learn more](#).

sort comments:

Showing comments to of (pages total).

Find this article at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/niagaracounty/story/855080.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 The Buffalo News.