

Hanford Workers

Introducing The New Law for Hanford Workers

After many years of hard work, at long last, Hanford workers are now covered by a new law ([RCW 51.32.187](#)) making it easier and more affordable for them to open a Washington State Department of Labor & Industries occupational disease claim. An occupational disease is a job-related medical condition that typically develops slowly over time. For example, prolonged exposure to toxic fumes can lead to respiratory disease, which would be considered an occupational disease. [\[Learn more about occupational diseases\]](#)

Who Does the Law Apply To?

The new law applies to Hanford site workers. This means, any person, including a contractor or subcontractor, who was engaged in the performance of work either directly or indirectly, for the United States, regarding projects and contracts at the Hanford nuclear site and who worked on the site at the 200 east, 200 west, 300 area, environmental restoration disposal facility site, central plateau, or the river corridor locations for at least one eight-hour shift while covered under this title. Hanford workers are employed by the U.S. Department of Energy. But the DOE has repeatedly denied access to information about chemical exposures, resulting in a failure to protect and help these workers.

What Does the New Law Cover?

The new law assumes that specific medical conditions of Hanford workers are occupational diseases. This includes neurological disease, respiratory disease, beryllium disease, certain cancers, and heart problems (if they were incurred within 72 hours of exposure to fumes, toxic substances, or chemicals at the workplace).

What Does the New Law Lack?

The new law is a definite improvement for the plight of ailing Hanford workers, but it does not prove their claims. Workers still have to file and prove their claims. Because the new law creates a legal presumption, it is; however, much easier to prove workers' claims. The legal presumption was created to assist workers when they are proving their claims. The diseases and conditions (listed above) are now presumed to be related to work at Hanford unless proven otherwise.

The Benefits of Legal Presumption

Because of this presumption, the occupational disease claims of Hanford workers will now be easier to prove. Before this law was written, Hanford workers had to prove their medical conditions were related to the job. This required very expensive, difficult to obtain medical testimony. Under the new law, workers who show they have one of the specified medical conditions (listed above) are presumed to have experienced them in relation to their jobs at Hanford. If employers want to fight the claim, they have to prove medical conditions are not job-related. This presumption applies to workers during employment, after employment, and for the rest of their lives. It also applies to beneficiaries after the death of a Hanford worker.

[Read More](#)



Additional benefits of the new law include the ability to reopen an old occupational disease claim that was previously denied. It can now be filed as a new claim and reevaluated. Furthermore, attorney fees may now be paid for by your employer. The Statute of Limitations is also favorable for occupational diseases. For occupational diseases, the SOL is two years from the date a doctor informs the worker in writing of both the occupational disease and that a claim can be filed. This means most workers, or spouses, have at least two years (if not more) to file a claim.

Stand Up For Your Rights

Call Emery Reddy to find out more about this new law and additional federal benefits for which Hanford workers can qualify. Our experienced L&I attorneys can help Hanford workers now more than ever before, and we can help those Hanford workers who have had claims denied in the past. Call today **(206) 442-9106**.