

Appendix E

Asbestos Related Cancer

Background

Health Canada has concluded that a valid relationship exists between exposure to asbestos and certain types of cancers, including gastrointestinal, laryngeal, lung and mesothelioma.

Guidelines

1. Gastrointestinal cancer (i.e., esophagus, stomach, small bowel, colon, and rectum), lung cancer, mesothelioma and laryngeal cancers are compensable in the following circumstances:
 - a. There is a clear and adequate history of occupational or environmental exposure to asbestos dust. Occupations representing a higher risk for developing asbestos related cancers include:
 - i. Asbestos mining.
 - ii. Textile manufacturing.
 - iii. Insulation and filter material production.
 - iv. Construction.
 - v. Welding, plumbing and electrical work.
 - vi. Shipyard work.
 - b. While the risk of asbestos related cancer is highest among workers with the greatest cumulative exposure, increased risk may be seen even after short but intense exposure.
 - c. Depending on the length and intensity of exposure, the interval between onset and the diagnosis is as follows:
 - i. 10 to 20 years for laryngeal or gastrointestinal cancers.
 - ii. 10 years for lung cancer.
 - iii. 15 to 30 years for mesothelioma.
2. If a claim does not meet the conditions in Point 1, the WCB will make a decision on the real merits and justice of each case. Where evidence in support of both sides of an issue is approximately equal, the WCB will resolve the issue in favour of the worker (POL 02/2019, Decision Making). The WCB will give consideration to:
 - a. The nature of the occupation.
 - b. The extent and intensity of the exposure.
 - c. Other factors peculiar to the individual case.
3. Operations staff will consult a WCB Medical Officer before a claim for asbestos related cancer is denied, if there is a medical question.