Silicosis Fatality File

Brick Mason

A white male non-smoker was diagnosed with silicosis, emphysema, and lung cancer at age 70 after working 41 years as a mason laying brick. The diagnosis was made after an open lung biopsy (a chest X-ray had shown no evidence of silicosis).

This worker spent part of his time around coke ovens doing fire brick work. He wore a respirator when he was working in dusty conditions. Information about dust controls was not available.

Rock Driller

A 47-year-old man was diagnosed with severe silicosis after working 22 years as a rock driller. He was diagnosed in 1992 after he was brought to a hospital with respiratory failure and right heart failure. In the Spring of 1994, while he was on a ventilator, he died from respiratory failure. His autopsy confirmed advanced silicosis.

Before this worker’s diagnosis, he had never seen a doctor and had never had a chest X-ray. The drills he used were equipped with dust controls, but they were routinely inoperable.

Tunnel Worker

A white male worker died of silicosis at age 69 after working 2 years as a tunnel construction worker and 40 years as a nurse. He had been a smoker until age 59 and was exposed to silica during his 2-year employment in tunnel construction. Information about respirator use and dust controls was not available.

His nursing assignments included 5 years with the U.S. Public Health Service, 27 years with an automobile manufacturer, 1 year with a paper manufacturer, 6 years with various hospitals, and 1 year with a magazine publisher.