

**Miller, Diane M.**

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**From:**

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 03, 2003 2:36 PM

**To:** NIOSH Docket Office

**Subject:** Worker Compensation Program

I noticed the building I worked in at ORNL (Building 7920, Transuranic Processing Facility) was not included in the NIOSH Site Profile Document. When I mentioned it to a friend who's knowledgeable about the worker compensation program, they told me I should let you know about it and to provide some background information about my situation. They said this kind of input could be used to help justify giving ORNL special cohort status. So.....here goes:

I am a -year-old female, a former technician at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and I was diagnosed with a very rare cancer (myxofibrosarcoma) in my foot, which required it to be amputated on Jan.16, 2003. Less than one year later, I am now undergoing extensive imaging because of concerns this cancer, which I've been told by my orthop. oncologist at Vanderbilt almost never metastasizes, has likely moved to my lungs.

I have NOT yet applied for worker compensation because of what I know about the dose reconstruction and physician panel backlogs and the potential difficulties I face in having a dose reconstruction performed for me because of the lack of data.

Nevertheless, I try to keep up with the status of this program. Therefore, I was very surprised to find that the building I worked in (Building 7920, which was known as the Transuranic Processing Facility in 1979) was not profiled by NIOSH in its Site Profile Document. Why was it not included? It was one of the "hottest" places to work at ORNL at the time I worked there. The senior technician whom I worked with once told me that he and I were listed as the number one and two most exposed persons at ORNL.

I began working at ORNL as a technician when I was 19 years old, and I worked from . . . . . until the fall of . . . . . I was exposed to what I consider significant levels of gamma and fast-neutron radiation (although I believe the senior technician helped protect me as best he could), as well as common laboratory chemicals. I quit this job because of my fear of the gamma and fast-neutron exposures, particularly since I was a young female of child-bearing age, and because of the inadequate responses I received from the Health Physics group in our building when I asked to see the studies proving it was safe. I became even more concerned when we were made to perform runs in a glove-box that would normally have been done in a hot cell. This occurred because the hot cell was shut down for maintenance, and the manager decided we would do the runs using a lead shield to block the radiation from most of our torso (not to mention the dosimeters dangling from our collars at a level that I believe was behind the lead, possibly lowering our reported readings). However, our heads, arms, and legs (and feet) were totally unprotected and unmonitored. When I asked the senior technician about ring dosimeters, I was told they didn't really work and weren't worth the hassle and that our extremities couldn't really be harmed.

However, I am now extremely suspicious that my cancer is the result of my exposure to radiation. Because of my suspicions, I filed a FOIA request, which allowed me to look at the old notebooks. Unfortunately, I do not believe there is enough information to do a dose reconstruction, but I am certainly no expert and other data could be available in other notebooks that I did not have access to. Nevertheless, as a result of my research and my knowledge of the backlogs, I have not yet filed an application.

Regardless of my plans to file, I believe you should include Building 7920 at ORNL in your site profiles.