



NIOSH Dose Reconstruction Project Meeting On Bridgeport Brass Site Profile

Meeting Date:

March 31, 2005

Meeting with:

United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)

Attendees:

Philip Winkle	United Auto Workers
Hoyt Emerson (by phone)	United Auto Workers, retired

NIOSH and ORAU Team Representatives:

William Murray – Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU)

Mark Lewis – Advanced Technologies and Laboratories International, Inc. (ATL)

Proceedings

William Murray began the meeting by introducing himself and Mark Lewis. Mr. Murray explained that he is working for ORAU, the prime contractor to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). Mr. Murray explained that Mark Lewis is the Union Outreach Specialist and that he works for ATL, a subcontractor to ORAU. Mr. Lewis has many years of experience with the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers (PACE) International Union.

Mr. Murray explained that the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act provides for two types of compensation claims (Subtitles B and E), both of which are administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The Worker Outreach team deals with only the Subtitle B radiation claims. A claim may be filed by an employee, or the survivors of an employee, who contracted cancer which they believe may be the result of the employee's exposure to radiation while working at a Department of Energy (DOE) or an Atomic Weapons Employer (AWE) facility. If the claim is awarded, the claimant will receive \$150,000.00—and, if the worker is still living, medical expenses for the treatment of the cancer.

Mr. Murray explained that the role of NIOSH is to reconstruct the radiation doses that the workers received while working at the DOE or AWE sites. He said that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss information that could be used in developing the Bridgeport Brass Site Profile, which would be used in reconstructing the radiation doses for people who had filed claims relating to Bridgeport Brass.

In response to a question about whether there had been any previous outreach to former workers related to this site, Mr. Murray said that the ORAU Team had not done any previous outreach on Bridgeport Brass. He said that people who worked at approximately 330 sites are eligible to file



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claims, and the Worker Outreach Program has met with groups representing between 20 and 25 sites during the past year.

Mr. Murray explained that a claim for a radiation-induced cancer is sent to NIOSH, where the contractor group calculates how much radiation exposure the worker received. There are various components to the worker exposures. Workers can receive an external dose of radiation from sources outside of the body and/or an internal dose from radioactive material that is inhaled or ingested. Radiation dose for employees who were not monitored can be calculated based on information in the Site Profile on occupational environmental dose. Since many companies required their employees to have periodic chest x rays, another dose component that is calculated in the dose reconstruction is the occupational medical dose.

Mr. Murray explained that the components of the occupational radiation dose (external dose, internal dose, occupational environmental dose, and occupational medical dose) are discussed in a document called a Site Profile. Specific information is needed for each component of the radiation dose discussed in the site profile.

For the External Dose section of the site profile, it is important to know if workers wore dosimeters (badges) to measure radiation exposure, what types of radiation exposure were measured, how often badges were exchanged, the location on the body that the badges were worn, which workers received badges, how missing and lost badges were handled, and any problems that there were with the badges.

For the Internal Dose section, it is important to know what radioactive materials were at the site, how the radioactive contamination was controlled, what type of air monitoring was performed and how often, and what types of radioactive materials were monitored and where. Also, if urine samples were taken to measure how much radioactive material was in the body, it is important to know how often and which employees participated in the program.

Comment:

All of the radiation work at Bridgeport Brass was performed under one roof in a building which was isolated from the others, so non-radiological workers would not have been in the rad building.

Comment:

The local media would be very interested in knowing what is going on with the EEOICPA program and what is trying to be accomplished. This would result in free publicity for seeking out survivors and former Bridgeport Brass employees. I am glad to see the Worker Outreach team in town, and I understand the enormous task that has been undertaken by NIOSH. Since someone has to perform this task, let's get it done. It is very important to use the media to reach former workers and survivors of former workers who have knowledge about the Bridgeport Brass site.

Mark Lewis:

I would like to meet with the retiree organizations and speak to them prior to getting the media involved. Our focus is on getting information about the work that was performed at the Bridgeport Brass site.



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William Murray:

It is important to NIOSH that the doses are reconstructed in a way that is favorable to the claimant. This is the reason that it is so important to get information from the workers—the site experts.

Question:

Does NIOSH have access to the corporate records that discussed the requirements for individuals who worked in specific departments?

William Murray:

Yes, NIOSH does have access. However, any information that former workers can remember about the Bridgeport Brass site or procedures is very important information that should be sent to NIOSH.

Comment:

You will need to personally interview key people.

Question:

I am not sure if the Gerady plant would be involved in this particular project. Is Gerady a part of your project? Gerady was a plant across the street that was primarily engaged in plating, buffing, and chroming.

William Murray:

I do not know anything about Gerady.

Mr. Murray explained that the Occupational Environmental Dose section of the site profile considers both internal radiation dose and external radiation dose. For internal radiation dose, it is important to find out if the air was monitored for radioactive materials at the site. For external radiation dose, it is important to know if any monitoring was performed in outside areas at the plant.

Mr. Murray said that because the occupational medical dose is also considered, it is important to know if workers received x rays, how often x rays were performed, what type of x rays were performed, and the type of x-ray equipment that was used.

The Site Description portion of the site profile describes radiation sources that were present inside of the plant, the processes and activities that took place at the plant, as well as information regarding incidents and accidents.

Mr. Murray said that the group is trying to find out if anyone has any records that could be used for developing the site profile. In addition, any information regarding the accuracy or completeness of the radiation protection records would be useful, as well as any other sources of information. If there are any other people who might have more information—those names would be very useful.

One of the meeting attendees mentioned interviewing people. Mr. Murray responded that we have learned that when people with knowledge get together and talk, more information is generated because their collective memories are stimulated.



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Finally, Mr. Murray requested that all information be sent directly to NIOSH. He provided the mailing address for NIOSH as well as the fax number and email address.

Discussion Session

Comment:

One former worker might be able to assist in finding facts regarding the Bridgeport Brass site.

Comment:

I don't know of anyone who has received compensation from the EEOICPA.

William Murray:

There are approximately 75 claims related to Bridgeport Brass. Thirteen claims have been processed by NIOSH, and, at this time, none of them have been awarded.

Question:

How long do you anticipate that you are going to have to complete the Bridgeport Brass Site Profile?

William Murray:

Site profiles go through an extensive review within the ORAU contractor team and then with NIOSH to ensure that they are of good quality. Until NIOSH is satisfied with the site profile, they will not approve it. We do not expect the Bridgeport Brass site profile to be completed until May. All site profile documents are living documents, meaning that if new information becomes available that could impact the dose reconstructions, the site profile will be revised to reflect the new information.

Comment:

The NIOSH/ORAU team has taken on an extremely difficult task.

William Murray:

The task is made easier by getting input from site experts like you. For example, the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant Site Profile was revised based on the input of the former plant workers. The same is true for other sites such as Hanford.

Mark Lewis:

In order to get as much worker information as possible, we work through labor organizations.

William Murray:

Site expert information is crucial because much of the information used in the site profiles is based on government or contractor records.

Comment:

It might be useful for the ORAU Team to talk with former workers.

Comment:

Here is a brief history of the plant. Originally it was Bone Aluminum Corporation, built to make bomber parts. After Bone Aluminum decided that they could not run it properly, the



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plant was sold to Bridgeport Brass. One thing that you need to understand is that it was going to be scrapped. But in 1963, President Kennedy was petitioned by a U.S. Senator from Michigan to take it off the scrapped list. Through the Federal bidding process, Bridgeport Brass brought the plant under their ownership. Bridgeport used the same employees and had a continuation of the local union. The United Auto Workers has represented the plant since it was built under Bone Aluminum Corporation.

Comment:

We will be happy to put you in touch with people to help with this process. For example, I know that one former worker is still very in tune to all of this and would be happy to sit down and talk with you. We could have notes taken.

William Murray:

After various people review the presentation and the Bridgeport Site Profile document, we could convene a site expert meeting in Adrian, Michigan.

The dose reconstruction calculations are based on the best information available. Data is entered into a computer program to calculate a probability that the cancer was caused by the radiation exposure. If the probability is greater than 50%, the person will be awarded the claim. If it is less than 50%, the claim is denied. When Congress passed the EEOICPA, they specified that the program should be based on scientific data. We want to make sure that this program uses the best science available and that it is comprehensive.

The DOL has passed on approximately 18,000 cancer-related claims to NIOSH/ORAU for dose reconstruction. It took 14 months to complete the first 1,000 claims. It took 14 weeks to complete the second 1,000 claims. At this time, about 7,000 claims have been processed. Many of the first 5,000 claims filed have been the most difficult for dose reconstruction, and we are still working on many of those.

Comment:

I am very pleased that you are here.

Mark Lewis:

It is important that we meet with the site experts.

Comment:

I will make the necessary contacts and coordinate a convenient meeting date.

The meeting ended as Mr. Murray and Mr. Lewis thanked the UAW attendees for their time and indicated that they would be in touch.