Occupational Disease Among Construction Workers

CPWR research shows ...

- *Lung cancer deaths are* 50% *higher* among construction workers than the U.S. population, even when adjusted for smoking.
- Construction workers are twice as likely to have chronic obstructive lung diseases, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, as the rest of our nation.
- Construction workers are five times as likely to have a cancer of the lung lining, mesothelioma, and 33 times as likely to have asbestosis, an incurable and fatal lung disease.
- Of thousands of construction workers examined in this decade, 5% had asbestosis and 20% had scarring of lung lining from asbestos exposure.
- Construction workers breathe dust (containing silica, asbestos and other particulates), welding fumes (containing heavy metals) and toxic gases.
- 30-40% of construction workers suffer musculoskeletal disorders and *chronic pain*.
- 50% of construction workers have noise-induced *hearing loss*.
- Construction workers account for 17% of workers with elevated blood lead levels*, which is disproportionately high because construction is only 8% percent of the workforce. Lead exposure can damage the nervous system, kidneys and other organs, and *cause infertility and miscarriages*.
- When welding, 75% of boilermakers, 15% of ironworkers and 7% of pipefitters exceed the accepted 8-hour level for manganese exposure, a known neurotoxin in steel that can cause **neurological damage similar to Parkinson's** disease.

^{*} This number may be low due to noncompliance among employers to test and report workers' blood lead levels. Abnormal levels are considered those above 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood; 17% of construction workers have levels 25 and greater.

