

Are You Suffering from an Industrial Disease?

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People work with potential dangers within their workplace every day and are not always aware of those dangers and what those dangers can cause. Processes and systems within the workplace can often expose employees to dusts, chemicals, fumes, and noise.

Respiratory disease

Work-related respiratory disease covers a range of illnesses that are caused or made worse by breathing in hazardous substances that damage the lungs such as dusts, fumes and gases. The most prevalent of these diseases are COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), asthma, silicosis and asbestosis which is a lung disease caused by exposure to asbestos.

Asbestos-related disease

The Health and Safety Executive reports that asbestos can be found in any building built or refurbished before the year 2000 (houses, factories, offices, schools, hospitals etc.) and causes around 5000 deaths a year. When materials that contain asbestos are disturbed or damaged, fibres are released into the air. When these fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases such as Mesothelioma (cancer that affects the pleural lining of the lungs), asbestos-related lung cancer, Asbestosis (serious scarring condition of the lungs) and pleural thickening. None of these lung diseases show effects immediately as they often take a long time to develop.

The dangers of work-based asbestos have been known for more than fifty years, but the problem is that the result of asbestos exposure only becomes apparent 15 to 30 years after exposure.

Other diseases

Employees can also suffer hearing loss, repetitive strain injuries, vibration white finger, and dermatitis caused by exposure to certain materials and chemicals.

Working with noisy tools, machinery or equipment or in a noisy working environment can damage hearing and bring about hearing loss and tinnitus. However, the negative effects of being exposed to excessive noise may not be felt for several years.

Unfortunately, the law cannot make people better but, if possible, it can help anyone suffering from an industrial disease claim for financial compensation.

A claim can be made up to three years from the date you knew or ought to have known that you were suffering from a work-related illness, but you should always seek the advice of solicitors about making a claim.

What to do next

If a work disease is diagnosed, then the injured party should seek legal advice as soon as possible to find out if they have a claim.

Neil McKinley is a leading personal injury solicitor at JMP Solicitors and specialises in industrial disease claims. For further advice please call Neil on 01476 565 295 or email nmkinley@jmp-solicitors.com.

