

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.