

Spring 2026

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Workers' Compensation for Gynaecological Diseases

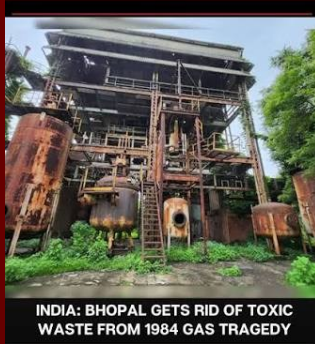
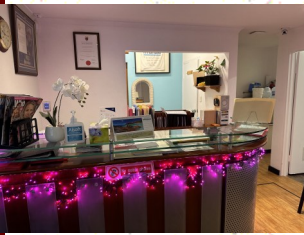
I recently had an interesting workers compensation case involving a woman who developed invasive breast cancer whilst working as a fire officer. The rationale for accepting breast cancer as a compensable injury related to the toxic exposure of fire officers to fire retardants and also the toxins released from burning plastics and other inflammables.:

Agent	Source	Risk
Polycyclic hydrocarbons	Incomplete burning of organic material	Mutagenic effect on DNA causing cancers
Benzene	Burning petrol, plastics and household material	Leukaemia
Formaldehyde	Product of combustion	Carcinogen
1,3 Butadiene	Burning rubber or wood	Leukaemia
Heavy metals such as cadmium, arsenic & chromium	Found in soot and ash	Lung, bladder and renal cancer
Polyfluoroalkyl substances	Older firefighting clothing	Testicular cancer

Exposure to wildfire smoke was associated with a significantly increased risk of lung, colorectal, breast, bladder, and blood cancer, according to results from a study presented at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2026, held April 17-22. Fire and Rescue have accepted many of these risks causing cancer as Workers Compensable. That was a reasonable decision for men and women who put their lives on the line for us.

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Industrial Hazards in Reproductive Health-Bhopal ,India



Bhopal December 1984

Bhopal is the capital of Madhya Pradesh .The Union Carbide Limited (India) chemical factory. manufactured Carbaryl—a pesticide .A leak in the manufacturing process led to an exothermic reaction causing the release of an estimated 45 tonnes of methyl cyanate—a highly toxic and volatile organic compound- into the atmosphere . Five hundred thousand inhabitants were exposed and estimated 3,800 people died immediately, mostly in the poor slum colony adjacent to the UCC plant Estimates of the number of people killed in the first few days by the plume from the UCC plant run as high as 10,000, with 15,000 to 20,000 premature deaths reportedly occurring in the subsequent two decades .Delayed responses included increased rates of perinatal death , increased infant mortality ,decreased placental and birthweights and increased rates of chromosomal abnormalities in the offspring. Late reproductive effects included an increase in pelvic inflammatory disease due to damage to

pelvic tissues; ; heavy menstrual bleeding and dysmenorrhoea ;infertility and premature menopause. The chemical plume altered the health profiles of the children of survivors. The daughters of gas-exposed mothers continue to exhibit significantly higher baselines of menstrual disorders and pelvic abnormalities compared to unexposed populations. The Union Carbide settlement for the disaster was only \$US 470 million. Ninety percent of claimants received <\$500 for lifelong suffering .In March 2023, the Supreme Court dismissed a curative petition filed by the Indian government that sought an additional ₹7,400 crore (approx. US\$1.2 billion) from successor companies to increase payouts. The court ruled that the settlement could not be reopened decades later without a viable plan for extra funding from the government itself .

Further Reading:

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