



THE BAIE VERTE MINERS REGISTRY

PLAIN-LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT

March 2013

This document is a plain-language summary of the full report, “Registry of the Former Workers of the Baie Verte Asbestos Mine” that was produced by the SafetyNet Project Team for the Baie Verte Miners’ Registry Working Group. The full report can be found on the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission website (www.whscc.nl.ca), the United Steelworkers union website (www.usw.ca), or on the SafetyNet website (www.safetynet.mun.ca).

What is the Baie Verte Miners’ Registry?

The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC), the United Steelworkers (USW), and the Baie Verte Peninsula Miners’ Action Committee created the Baie Verte Miners’ Registry to help collect, complete and verify records in order to track the health and work history of any person who worked at the mine or mill in Baie Verte. The work on this project began in August, 2008 and data collection ended in July, 2011.

This Registry brings information from many different sources together in one secure place for each person who registers (‘registrant’). The information will be easily accessible by the registrant and the WHSCC if a claim is filed for a disease that may be related to asbestos exposure. Information from the Registry can also be used by a registrant’s health professional to help diagnose and treat diseases and conditions that may be caused by asbestos.

What information is in the Registry?

For each person who registered ('registrant') there is an electronic and a paper file that contains:

- his or her work history;
- an estimate of his or her total exposure to asbestos fibres;
- the answers provided by the registrant, or their next of kin, to a set of questions in our survey on health and employment; and,
- information about the registrant's current health and health history taken from the medical and hospital reports provided to us.

With each registrant's written permission, we gathered information from as many of the following sources as possible:

- the completed survey;
- company employee files;
- hospital and medical records;
- Newfoundland and Labrador Vital Statistics;
- files from Miners' Medical examinations;
- WHSCC claim files;
- the results of physical exams done by Dr. Irving Selikoff in 1976 / 1977;
- the Newfoundland and Labrador Cancer Registry; and,
- the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information.

Who is registered?

It is estimated that somewhere between 2400 and 2800 people worked at the Baie Verte mine site at one time or another. Of these, 1003 people have joined the Registry. Of these 1003 people, 824 registered themselves, and 179 were registered by their next of kin (178 deceased, 1 alive). Fifteen of the 824 who registered themselves have passed away since they registered but are counted as 'alive' in our reporting.

Most of the registrants are male and most of them are currently living in the Baie Verte area. The average age of the registrants who are living is 64 years. The deceased people in the registry were an average of 68 years old when they died.

The average number of years that our registrants worked at the mine was just over 10 years. Seventy-one percent of the registrants started working in the mine/mill before 1975 and 91% started before 1980. Forty-five percent of the registrants worked at the site for 10 years or more and almost 65% worked there for 5 years or more. Thirteen percent of the registrants worked at the site for less than 1 year.

How much asbestos were registrants exposed to?

Exposure is presented in a unit of measurement called ‘fibre-years’. Fibre-years is a term used by scientists to describe how much asbestos someone was exposed to based on the estimated amount of asbestos in the air during the time someone worked at the mine. For example, two people may each have worked at the mine for five years, but one may have worked in an area with higher asbestos exposure. Therefore, this person would have a higher number of ‘fibre-years’ even though both workers were at the mine for the same amount of time.

According to limits permitted today, the maximum amount of asbestos to which workers are allowed to be exposed during a working lifetime of 40 years is 4 “fibre-years.” On average, registrants were exposed to 72.2 fibre-years of asbestos. The percentage of registrants exposed to less than 4.0 fibre-years was 25.1%. Almost 75% of registrants were estimated to be exposed to 4.0 fibre-years or more. We were able to estimate exposure only for work at the mine/mill in Baie Verte. Some workers’ total exposure might be higher if they were also exposed to asbestos at other jobs, at home, or in the community while not at work.

What are the possible health effects of this exposure?

The health effects of working with asbestos include an increased risk of developing a number of diseases and conditions. The following diseases and conditions are known to be related to exposure to asbestos:

Asbestosis	Interstitial pulmonary fibrosis
Lung cancer	Rounded atelectasis
Pleural mesothelioma	Pleural effusions
Peritoneal mesothelioma	Laryngeal cancer
Pleural plaques	Ovarian cancer

Scientists currently regard gastro-intestinal cancers (cancers of the stomach, colon, rectum, and oesophagus) as well as pharyngeal cancer as only possibly asbestos-related. The Registry tracks diagnoses of these cancers but does not count these cancers as asbestos-related at this time.

What do we know about the health of the people in the Registry?

Among the 825 registrants who were living when they registered (including 1 registered by proxy), we found 76 cases of asbestos-related diseases documented in medical charts. These cases involved 51 living individual registrants since some registrants had more than one documented asbestos-related disease. Among the 178 registrants who were deceased at the time of registration (registered by their next of kin), we found 93 documented cases of asbestos-related diseases involving 58 registrants.

Where can you get more information about the Registry?

The full report contains more information on how the Registry was designed, what types of information it includes, and how that information was used. The full report can be found on the web at www.whscc.nl.ca, www.usw.ca, and at www.safetynet.mun.ca.

If you have any questions about the Registry or would like to request a paper copy of the full report, you can contact the:

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