



URANIUM EXPOSURE

POST '71

MILL WORKERS
MINERS
TRANSPORTERS

History of Post '71 Uranium Workers

People who worked in uranium before 1971 qualify for federal assistance for uranium-related medical conditions under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA).

Uranium workers after 1971 (post '71) do not qualify for RECA compensation although they are just as sick as pre '71 workers.

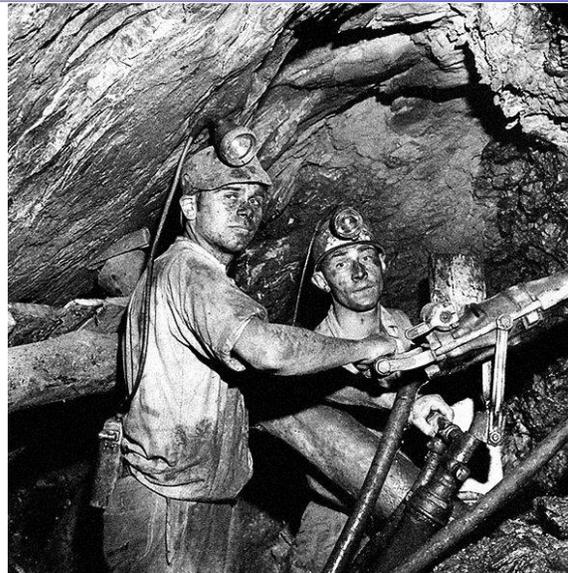
In January of 2007, former uranium workers and their spouses, many with debilitating health conditions, sat down around a dining room table in Grants, New Mexico to put together a survey of those who worked after 1971 in the New Mexico uranium industry.

They formed the Post '71 Uranium Workers Committee (P'71) and after several unsuccessful attempts to secure help from professional researchers, created their own survey with questions about working conditions and worker/family health.

The survey was put up on the organization's website and distributed at meetings around northern New Mexico. These efforts, aided by word of mouth, resulted in 1300 surveys received primarily from NM and some from 23 other states. The results of the survey are available on the website:

<http://www.post71exposure.org/results.html>

Post '71 also advocates for the expansion of RECA compensable diseases. Currently only 8 conditions are recognized by RECA while 3 other US Government agencies (OSHA, EPA, CDC) recognize 15 other conditions.



SAMPLE OF SURVEY FINDINGS

Seventy-two percent of Post'71 workers responding to the survey reported one or more uranium-related medical conditions (illnesses and symptoms) recognized by OSHA, EPA, the CDC and (DOJ)-RECA.

Thirty percent of female workers and forty percent of female spouses reported one or more reproductive disorders, including miscarriages, stillbirths and bearing children with birth defects.

Nine percent of respondents reported RECA compensable diseases. (It is unknown what percentage of pre 1971 workers has RECA compensable diseases).

Seventy percent of respondents reported respiratory conditions. Unexpected was that **joint pain came second (56 %) and chronic skin disorders as the third highest (nearly 30%)**.

Survey results show a need for a comprehensive health survey on workers and their families.

Questions include: what is the full impact of exposure to uranium and other contaminants on reproductive systems of workers, families, and future generations? Is there a relationship between uranium exposure and the high incidence of arthritis and degenerative joint disease, cardiovascular and gastrointestinal illnesses found in uranium workers?

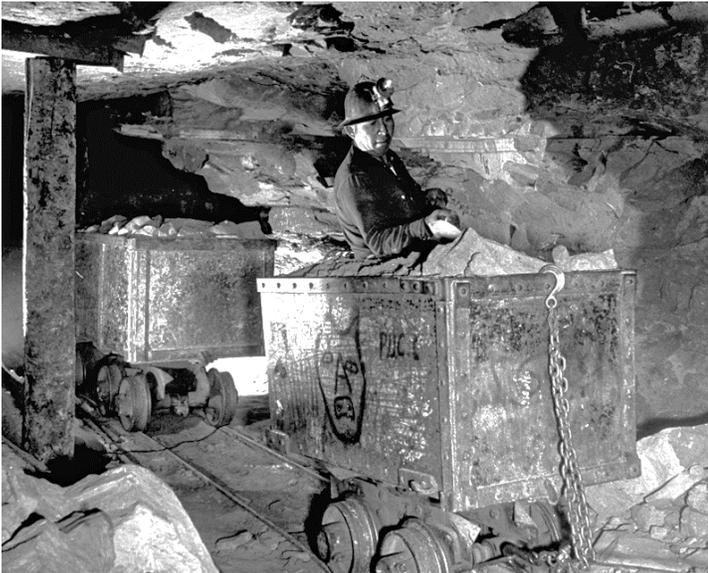


Figure 1 Loomis Dean/TimeLifePictures/Getty Images

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

The highest number of survey responses by workers was in the section asking questions about working conditions: out of the 1,300 surveys, nearly than 1,200 workers made critical comments about workplace conditions.

OSHA guidelines for the protection of uranium workers state: *“A worker who handles uranium or an insoluble uranium compound should thoroughly wash hands, forearms, and face with soap and water before eating, using tobacco products, or using toilet facilities.”* Yet **Seventy-nine % of the workers responding said that there were no wash basins available.**

Seventy-nine percent of respondents said they did not receive adequate training, education or literature on the health dangers involved in working with uranium and how to protect themselves from contamination.

Fifty-six percent said inspected and approved personal respiratory protection equipment was not regularly provided.

Two-thirds of respondents said individual radon monitors were never provided, even though federal and state mine safety regulations required individual exposure records to be kept for all employees.

Only a third of the respondents said safety meetings and trainings were conducted regularly.

WHO RESPONDED TO THE POST'71 SURVEY?

Sixty-Seven Percent began working when they were 24 or younger. Mean age of survey-takers was 54

An average of 6.6 years in the industry were worked by respondents.

Gender: 86% were male and 14% were female.

Race/Ethnicity:

57% Hispanic

21% Anglo

21% Native American

Native American affiliation. Of the 21% Native Americans who took the survey:

40% were Pueblo

57% were Navajo

1% had other tribal affiliation

POLICY STATUS

2015: NM Legislature HR 95 Memorial

passed unanimously recognizing the contributions and on-going health problems of NM Uranium workers

2015: US Senate S 331 extends compensation to Post '71 workers, expands *some* additional uranium-related health conditions & funding for a health study of uranium-related medical conditions. Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee until such time that Congress decides to do its job.

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