

Statement of James Armour

In answer to how I feel about having pleural plaques. I know that once I have asbestos in my body I will always have it and it never leaves the body. Asbestos can grow in your body and it can lodge in your body or your wife's body. My friend's wife got asbestosis from washing his dungarees and died. She had an awful time.

I had a tumour removed from my bowel in the 1950s when I was still working and was only in my 20s. I have never smoked. Although no one said it was related to the asbestos exposure I know there can be a link. I am the last of my squad, I know my helper [REDACTED] who worked alongside me got asbestosis so what chance have I. All the others are dead. We were working with it and in it. I remember the man in the passageway mixing it up in a half barrel and then it was spread on top of the pipes. We had no masks and the plasterer that worked with me and spread it on died in his forties leaving seven children. It was like snow, it was everywhere.

A family from the Albertbridge Road, called [REDACTED], were pipe coverers and they are all gone. You just never know because no one can tell you for definite that you will be okay.

Signed James Armour

Dated this 12 day of 2nd 2011.

My GP advised me on the 2nd January 2004 that I might be entitled to bring a claim because of my pleural plaques. Because I was not unwell at that time I did not take his advice and did not pursue the matter. I was subsequently diagnosed with lung cancer and I had surgery to remove the tumour and a portion of my right lung was removed. That happened in October 2004. Following my treatment in 2006 I submitted a claim for a legal assistance to my Union in respect of my condition.

In February 2007 I was admitted again to the Royal Victoria Hospital with a reoccurrence of my lung problems. I had three further operations on my right lung during the following three months. The first was a lobectomy and a piece of my lung was removed. The second also involved a removal of a section of my lung. The third operation involved a thoracoplasty. As you can image this has had a major effect on my daily life. One small detail as an example is my travel insurance.

As I have already stated I regret not having pursued this claim in 2004. I have received great care from [REDACTED], my surgeon and his team in particular during my 13 week stay in the Royal Victoria Hospital. I am advised that because I have pleural plaques as opposed to asbestosis it is not possible to make the link between the lung cancer and the pleural plaques however I have had numerous problems since being diagnosed with pleural plaques and I now live in fear that in addition to the lung cancer I may at some stage develop asbestosis.



I do not accept that Pleural Plaques disease does not cause harm as a generally held understanding. I feel that I am walking around each day under a death sentence – like carrying a time-bomb waiting to explode. Having Pleural Plaques disease is the first thing I think about each morning and the last thing at night. This illness causes me to continuously cough trying to expel phlegm from my lungs. I experience pain in my lungs at the centre of my back each day and night. I now suffer from anxiety and have difficulty sleeping each night. I frequently wake with recurrent nightmares in which I am being suffocated and am gasping for breath. When I carry out any kind of everyday activity I start to cough and experience difficulty with breathing. Out of doors I experience breathlessness with just slight exertion – I have to use a mutability vehicle to get around.

I believe I should receive compensation as a sufferer of Pleural Plaques because of the way my life has been downgraded to daily managing disability, of adjusting everyday living to within the confines of disability. I feel had I been made aware of the dangers of asbestos by my former employers I would have been able to take appropriate safety measures to protect my health. I also feel that the risks of developing pleural mesothelioma have been grossly underestimated and undervalued by government and associated bodies and not fully investigated. I base this on two friends who suffered from the disease and who have subsequently both died.

In conclusion it is very clear to me that I have been exposed to lung disease by working in a dangerous environment. I was not advised of the risks of that environment. I believe that I should not be punished twice by loss of compensation, for not having the health and safety protection that is currently enjoyed in the workplace. I believe that former employers have been negligent (however innocent) and that some form of compensation payment should be made in recognition of my illness and its consequences.

All my friends with pleural plaques were compensated for the condition before they decided that we did not count. I do have trouble with my chest on a regular basis, I have difficulty going up or down stairs and I have not been diagnosed with any other problem. There is only two of my squad left.

When I was working the asbestos was flying everywhere. I could see it in the chinks of sunlight and that is what you were breathing in. I never smoked cigarettes but yet some nights when I waken up I cannot get a breath. I take a puffer but it can be very difficult. I know one person who got a lump sum for the condition and another person who gets Industrial Injuries Benefit but I get nothing and that seems unfair.

Signed.....*W. J. M. Chesney*.....

Dated this 13 day of FEB,

2011

In July 2007 I was referred to the Chest Clinic because I had noticed that I was having some difficulty breathing. A CT scan was carried out in September 2007 and I was told that I had pleural plaques as a result of asbestos exposure. I was also told there was some evidence of interstitial fibrosis which they believed was connected to the asbestos exposure.

I worked at the shipyard between 1961 and 1963. I was storeman but also spent 6 months on the boats as a labourer when I worked closely beside pipe ladders. A medical report was obtained from a Consultant Physician who was of the opinion that I did not have asbestosis although the pleural plaques was confirmed and I was told that I should not worry.

Despite this however I do have to go every six months to the Mater Hospital to have further tests carried out to assess whether or not I have developed asbestosis or anything else more sinister. The doctor looking after me at the Mater Hospital has told me that I should try and walk as much as possible and I do but sometimes I find it quite difficult especially if there is a hill.