

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Deadline Nears for 9/11 Recovery Workers at Risk of Illness

Time is running out for people who worked or volunteered in the vicinity of Ground Zero to register for workers' compensation in case of future illness tied to that work.

Only 39 days remain until the final registration deadline of September 13, 2010. Workers and volunteers must register by 11:59 p.m. on that date to be eligible for compensation and health care in case they later develop an illness tied to their activities at the World Trade Center site, said Joel Shufro, executive director of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH).

“Workers are developing symptoms years afterwards that may be related to their exposure at the Trade Center,” Shufro said. “Unless they register, no matter how sick they may become, they will be barred from registering for compensation.”

Up to 100,000 workers and volunteers who performed rescue, recovery or cleanup work in the vicinity of the World Trade Center after 9/11 are eligible to sign up with the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. As of early July, 40,633 have done so.

More than 20,000 have developed serious health problems from exposure to toxic dust or fumes at the site, or mental disorders caused by psychological trauma associated with their work. The most common illnesses linked to World Trade Center exposures include diseases of the upper respiratory system.

Often, symptoms take years to show. Even now, nearly nine years after the attacks, approximately 200 workers and volunteers enroll each month in World Trade Center monitoring and treatment programs, reporting the onset of symptoms from their exposure at the site. Altogether, about 45,000 have enrolled in such monitoring programs.

Any eligible person who registers by the Sept. 13th, 2010, deadline will have the right to file a 9/11-related workers' compensation at any time in the future, no matter when 9/11-related symptoms began to occur. If a worker is or becomes ill and the claim is established, workers' compensation will fully cover the cost of treatment, including prescriptions and hospitalization.

Most people who performed any rescue, recovery or cleanup work after 9/11 are living in the New York metropolitan area. Others have moved to other states or may have left the

country. Many may be unaware that they are at risk of developing 9/11-related disorders. They may also be unaware of the upcoming registration deadline.

Those eligible to register include most people who performed any rescue, recovery or cleanup work, no matter how briefly, paid or unpaid, in lower Manhattan south of Canal or Pike Streets between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 12, 2002. It also includes those who worked at the Staten Island landfill, the barge operation between Manhattan and Staten Island or the New York City morgue (or any of the temporary morgues set up during that period).

There is no residency or citizenship requirement to register for 9/11-related compensation. If workers or volunteers meet other eligibility criteria, it does not matter whether they live in New York State. Their immigration status—whether documented or not—also does not affect their eligibility.

For more about eligibility requirements and the registration procedure, workers and volunteers may go to the NYCOSH website at www.nycosh.org, or call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline, 1-866-WTC-2556. State guidelines and forms are here: <http://www.wcb.state.ny.us/content/main/forms/WTC-12.pdf>

The New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) is a non-profit education and advocacy organization, dedicated to ensuring that every worker has a safe and healthy workplace.

NYCOSH works in partnership with the United Church of Christ to provide assistance to all workers, volunteers and community residents who were adversely affected by toxic contamination resulting from the attack on the World Trade Center.