

Atomic Workers Need Our Help

Atomic workers in our Union do the dangerous but essential work of operating, maintaining, and cleaning up nuclear sites, governed by the Department of Energy (DOE), across our nation every day. They are routinely at risk of being exposed to toxic chemicals. They are increasingly being diagnosed with debilitating illnesses that are not immediately linked to on-the-job exposures. As if being ill wasn't bad enough, sick workers face a logistical nightmare when trying to obtain the care and compensation they are entitled to under existing laws.

The situation has gotten dangerous for our siblings at USW Local 12-369 working for CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Company at the Hanford cleanup site in Washington state. In March of 2020, the [Seattle Times ran an investigative story \(usw.to/3sh\)](#) chronicling the needless exposures and illnesses experienced at that site.

“Our members put their health and lives on the line daily to perform this work with the expectation that they will be taken care of if they get sick. The Toxic Exposure Safety Act would be a significant step to uphold that promise.” - Bill Collins, President, USW Local 12-369



There have not been substantial clinical or epidemiological studies done around toxic exposures at DOE sites. We need legislation that expands covered employees and covered illnesses. The Toxic Exposure Safety Act of 2021 would do this by amending current law to include employees exposed to toxic substances at cleanup sites. It would also establish a presumption of occupational disease exposures, create a research program to determine exposure-disease correlation, and direct the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate scientific evidence regarding chemical exposures.

Be on the lookout for future communications to see how you can help stand up for these workers' safety and get them the care and compensation they deserve!