

Dear Rubber Workers and Families,

You are invited to join us for a **Rubber Worker Follow-up Information Session at the United Way building (50 Sportsworld Crossing Rd., Suite #220) in Kitchener on September 17th**. An official invitation with details and directions is included in this package. Please RSVP by email (RW@ohcow.on.ca) or phone (437-214-1908) and leave a voicemail indicating whether you will or will not attend.

We are also writing to provide a progress update on OHCOW's investigation into occupational illnesses among Ontario Rubber Workers. For more information on the history of the project and to access our 2024-25 update letter, please visit our website at: <https://www.ohcow.on.ca/occupational-illness/occupational-disease-cluster-investigations/rubber-workers-project/>.

What is the status of the project?

Our Rubber Worker Database includes 293 workers, many of whom have suffered from multiple illnesses. The database includes information about each worker's health condition(s), job history, and WSIB claim status (e.g. approved, denied, at appeal). Although not all workers involved in the project have chosen to file a WSIB claim, the chart below summarizes what we know about those who have filed a claim:

WSIB Claim disease	Total # cases	Allowed	Denied	Pending	Unknown	At Appeal
Lung cancer	14	10	4			
Mesothelioma	< 5					
Pleural plaques	< 5					
Bladder cancer	22	13	9			
Gastrointestinal cancers	49	12	36	2		3
Hematological cancers	21	8	11	2		3
Head & neck cancers	14	1	12		2	3
Kidney cancer	6	2	4			2
Brain cancer	< 5					
Breast cancer	< 5					
Skin cancer	13	5	7		1	
Prostate cancer	29	2	27			1
Salivary gland cancer	5		5			3
Parkinson's Disease	< 5					
Respiratory disease	28	6	21	2	2	2
Heart disease	< 5					
Noise induced hearing loss	13	7	1		5	
Totals	232	69	151	7	10	21

We will review the findings in this chart at the upcoming information session. In the chart, some diseases are grouped by the body system involved. Here are what the terms mean:

- Gastrointestinal cancers: esophageal, stomach, colorectal, pancreatic, liver
- Head and neck cancers: Mouth, throat, voice box, nasal cavity & sinus.
- Hematological (blood-related) cancers: leukemia(s), lymphoma(s), & multiple myeloma
- Respiratory disease: COPD, asthma, interstitial fibrosis

We continue to review WSIB claims for any new information. We also continue to collect information about the layout of rubber plants, the chemicals used in specific areas/jobs, working conditions, plant inspection reports, published studies about the hazards and health effects of rubber work, and other relevant information. These efforts have improved our understanding of connections between industry hazards and disease development.

OHCOW may contact you to obtain copies of your WSIB claim files (accepted or denied) to determine if we can add additional support based on any new evidence. Unfortunately, the existing scientific and medical evidence does not necessarily enable us to support all claims. We are only revisiting claims for which new evidence exists.

You can help:

Here's how you can help with our review and support for claims:

- If we contact you, please consider giving OHCOW permission to obtain a copy of your (or your relative's) WSIB file for continued learning.
- Please spread the word about OHCOW and let others know we continue to take rubber worker cases (as well as cases from other industries).
- Let us know if you have papers, pictures, or materials you could share about working in any Kitchener plant (e.g. plant maps, safety data sheets, etc.) to support OHCOW's efforts to support rubber workers.

We know the road has been long for many of you. Thank you for sharing your stories and knowledge with us. We are dedicated to supporting you with any new questions about your health or exposure to industry hazards.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Sarah Rhodes, PhD
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