PAPER NASHVILLE BANNER
CITY NASHVILLE, TN
DATE 10-31-91 PAGE

50 TVA workers plan suit

By [illegible]

[illegible] 50 TVA employees in [illegible] and Cumberland City are [illegible] to file suit next month, [illegible] their agency with endangering their lives by exposing them to high concentrations of asbestos.

Nashville attorney [illegible] Moffett, an experienced [illegible] lawyer, has been retained by a group of employees at the TVA Shawnee Plant in [illegible].

This week Gordon Pulley, maintenance operator at the Cumberland City Fossil Plant in Stewart County, met with Moffett and is expected to bring other employees into any suit that is filed.

"What more can they do to us for bringing suit?" asks Pulley, a TVA employee for 15 years and a resident of [illegible].

"For [illegible] They've already killed me. That's what they've done by exposing me and dozens of others to asbestos."

"We're contemplating a suit in federal court," says Moffett.

[illegible] damages [illegible] environment; something like that.

[illegible] is working with New Orleans [illegible] Walker on the complaint [illegible].

No dollar amount of the damages [illegible] has been mentioned.

TVA acknowledges it has asbestos in its plants, but denies the fibers pollute the air to a dangerous degree.

Workers at the Sumner County plant and Pulley disagree. Pulley says other employees will go public with their concerns when the time comes.

They contend that insulation fell into the ventilation system at the Gallatin plant and on Feb. 1 some of the material was "blown down" with high-pressure air hoses, hurling asbestos fibers over a four-story area.

Asbestos has been determined to cause cancer in laboratory animals and has been ordered removed from most buildings.

TVA spokesman John Moulton confirms that there was asbestos in Gallatin, but says the air pollution level there never rose above accepted Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

He says the Feb. 1 incident occurred when workers were doing some routine cleaning and accidentally [illegible] the material [illegible] the problem was [illegible] and the parts removed.

"At Gallatin we've never had any formal complaints from employees that their working conditions were unsafe," says the TVA spokesman.

Any time there is any question about employee safety in the workplace, the TVA's Occupational Hygiene Department is alerted and experts are sent in to check on the situation, Moulton adds.

Pulley charges that the agency denied it had asbestos in the Cumberland City plant.

"The TVA knows it. They have the conditions have been bad. I've got them, over papers, where they've made cost estimates and where they were supposed to have fixed it, but they never have," says Pulley, claiming he has respiratory problems.

He says the problem arises because the heating and cooling pipes are wrapped in asbestos and then an asbestos-impregnated outer material. The contractor stepping and contracting breaks down the insulation and allows the dangerous particles to fill the air of the building, the operator says.

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