

Toxic Exposures

A variety of commonly used materials and chemicals can cause severe injury to a person who has been exposed to them. To recover damages for this type of injury, a victim can initiate a toxic tort personal injury lawsuit in which the victim has to prove that the injury was the result of exposure to a toxic material or chemical.

In order to show liability, plaintiffs must demonstrate that the substance they were exposed to was dangerous and that they sustained injury because of it. This is not an easy burden to carry, and requires an effective legal strategy and convincing documentation to support the plaintiff's injury claims.

Wilentz is a pioneering law firm when it comes to toxic tort litigation. Our practice dates back to 1977, when we were among the first law firms to file asbestos personal injury cases, and when we acted as co-counsel to the State of New Jersey in bringing the first personal injury case against Big Tobacco, which resulted in the landmark settlement of \$7.6 billion for New Jersey's citizens. We also represented the City of Newark and the City of New York in then-novel litigation against the lead paint industry, and co-led some of New Jersey's largest environmental contamination cases in Pompton Lakes, Maywood and Toms River. We were also instrumental in the formation of one of the first specialized state mass tort courts in Middlesex County, New Jersey.

Our Toxic Exposure team has been consistently recognized as National First Tier by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Best Lawyers* – Best Law Firms for Mass Tort Litigation/Class Action Plaintiffs. Many of the team's attorneys are recognized as *Super Lawyers*, *Best Lawyers in America*, and by other distinctions and designations.

Types of Injuries

Chemical exposure can cause a variety of injuries. The type of injury sustained is typically dependent on how the individual was exposed to the toxic substance. For example, respiratory effects can occur if the individual inhaled the hazardous chemical either as dust, vapor or in steam or smoke. Kidney and gastrointestinal effects can occur if the individual drank contaminated water or ate food grown in contaminated soil.

Certain chemicals affect primarily a target organ. Lead, for example, causes injury to the central nervous system, while chloroform is known to cause liver and kidney tumors specifically. Common injuries caused by chemical exposure for which victims may recover compensation include:

- Various forms of cancer – these include: lung, bladder, brain, kidney or skin cancer, as well as leukemia and lymphoma.
- **Learning disabilities** – such as ADD, ADHD and LD.
- Teratogenic effects – detrimental effects on the fetus of a mother who was exposed to hazardous chemicals before or during pregnancy.
- Respiratory –breathing difficulties, allergies and similar conditions.
- Gastrointestinal – various stomach conditions can occur when an individual has ingested a hazardous chemical or substance either through water contamination or soil contamination.
- Cardiovascular – heart problems have been known to occur following exposure to certain chemicals.
- Hepatic effects – various liver ailments can also occur due to chemical exposure.
- Renal – kidney problems, including blood in the urine and cancer can arise when exposed to specific chemicals.

- Neurological – various nervous system disorders have been documented following chemical exposure. This can include reflex malfunction and severe headaches.

These injuries are often severe and irreversible. In a significant portion of cases, toxic exposure can lead to death.

If you or a loved one have been exposed to toxic and hazardous chemicals and have experienced any of these symptoms or illnesses, you could be eligible to file a claim. Schedule a free consultation or phone a member of the Wilentz team today.

Call: 732-493-1000