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## Former Tank Cleaner Says Work with Benzene Led to Multiple Myeloma Development

NEW ORLEANS -- A former tank cleaner who says his work for one year at various local facilities exposed him to benzene-containing products has filed a lawsuit in Louisiana federal court. Morin, et al. v. Chevron USA Inc., et al., No. 11-00045 (E.D. La.).

In the Jan. 10 complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, the plaintiff also invokes the discovery rule, saying that he did not learn the cause of his multiple myeloma until just last year.

"The cancer took years to develop, and even when the symptoms did manifest, neither the physicians nor Mr. Morin detected the link between his benzene exposure and multiple myeloma," the complaint says. "The plaintiffs never heard or saw anything that linked benzene to Mr. Morin's multiple myeloma."

The plaintiffs contend that Bryan Morin's work as a tank cleaner for Oil Mop, Inc. for approximately one year exposed him to various benzene-containing products.

"From 1980 through 1981 Mr. Morin would regularly use or come into contact with pure benzene or benzene-containing products including gasoline, crude oil and jet fuel," the complaint says. "Mr. Morin cleaned tanks filled with benzene-containing products on a daily basis throughout his career from 1980 through 1981 while working for Oil Mop Inc. On October 21, 2008, Bryan Morin was diagnosed with multiple myeloma."

The lawsuit specifically names Chevron, Shell and ConocoPhillips as defendants, alleging that the defendants were manufacturers, distributors, sellers and suppliers of the benzene-containing products to which Morin was exposed.

"Through industry and medical studies unknown to plaintiffs, the defendants knew or should have known of the health hazards inherent in the products they manufactured, distributed, sold, supplied, owned, transported or used," the plaintiffs say. "The actions or inactions of the defendants constitute gross negligence and demonstrate a reckless disregard for the rights and safety of others."

The lawsuit asserts causes of action for negligence and strict product liability and seeks loss of consortium and compensatory damages.

Counsel for the plaintiffs are L. Eric Williams of the Williams Law Office in Metairie, La.; Richard J. Fernandez and Amber E. Cisney of Richard J. Fernandez, LLC, in Metairie, La.; and Paul Mayeaux of the Maynard Law Firm.

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