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3 New Benzene Complaints Filed in Louisiana, Assert Exposure at Shell Facilities

NEW ORLEANS — Three separate benzene lawsuits have been filed in Louisiana federal court, each contending that the plaintiffs were exposed to benzene at Shell Oil and Shell Chemical facilities.

The three complaints, each filed Jan. 9 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, involve claims of exposure from a contract tank cleaner, electrician, and pipefitter.

Henry and Elizabeth Vicknair argued in their complaint that Henry's work as a contract tank cleaner for Louisiana Tank Cleaning Service at Shell Oil and Shell Chemical required him to clean tanks with benzene, gasoline and diesel.

"He was regularly exposed to benzene during this period," the complaint asserted. "...From 1969 to 1978, he would regularly come into contact with benzene or through gasoline while loading gasoline tank trucks at the Shell Oil Norco facility and unloading at various locations."

The plaintiffs said that as a result of the exposure, Vicknair developed chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

The plaintiffs in Matherne said in their complaint that Dennis Matherne worked as a pipefitter for Turner Industries for 14 years at the Shell Oil and Shell Chemical in Norco and ConocoPhillips at the Alliance Refinery in Belle Chasse, La.

During the course of his employment, Dennis Matherne regularly came into contact with benzene-containing products — including crude oil, toluene, xylene, pyrolysis gasoline and gasoline — at the defendants' facilities.

As a result of the exposure, Matherne said he developed multiple myeloma, the complaint asserts.

Karen Deffes filed her lawsuit on behalf of Raymond Deffes, saying that he developed non-Hodgkin's lymphoma as a result of exposure to benzene.

Deffes worked as an electrician, Karen Deffes said in the complaint, for a number of companies for more than 20 years. Karen Deffes contended in the lawsuit that during his time as an electrician, Raymond Deffes regularly came into contact with benzene-containing products at Shell Oil and Shell Chemical facilities.

Deffes died in Dec. 2014, the lawsuit said.

"While working as an electrician from 1965 through 1989 Mr. Deffes was exposed daily to high levels of benzene when he repaired or replaced electrical equipment, rusted or damaged equipment, tied in new

electrical equipment while performing turnarounds, and worked on new construction jobs at the defendants' facilities," the lawsuit explained. "He was also exposed to high levels of benzene from products manufactured, distributed or sold by the defendants."

The plaintiffs in all three cases are represented by L. Eric Williams of the Williams Law Office LLC in Metairie, La.

Vicknair, et al. v. Shell Oil Company, et al., No. 15-00053 (E.D. La.).

Documents are Available Call (800) 496-4319 or Search www.harrismartin.com Vicknair Complaint Ref# BEN-1501-04 Marthene Complaint Ref# BEN-1501-05 Deffes Complaint Ref# BEN-1501-06

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