

Including Hanford Reservation

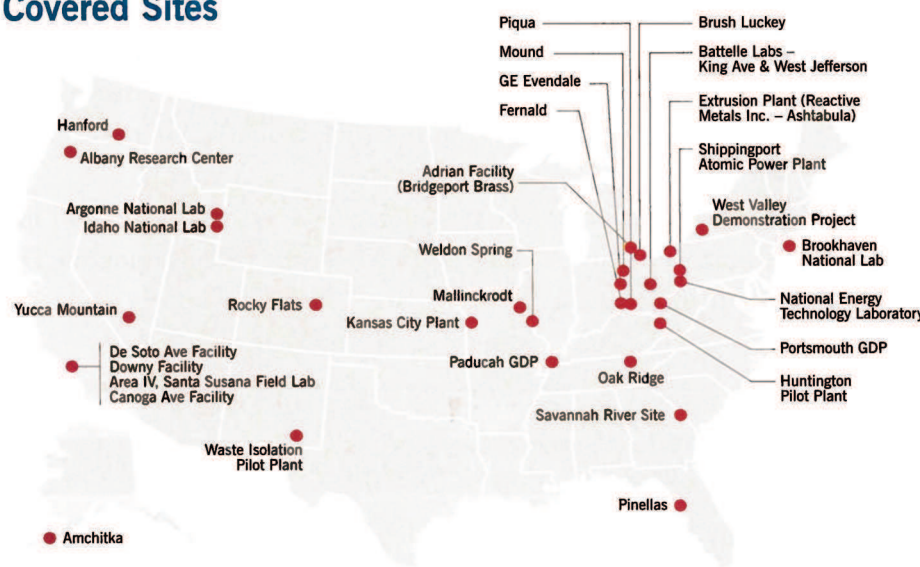
Building Trades national medical screening program (BTMed) helps nuclear weapons construction workers

Union construction workers who spent any time at all working at Hanford Reservation in Washington, the Albany Research Center in Oregon, or at any of the hundreds of nuclear weapons program sites in the U.S. are eligible to receive a free medical screening to see if they have been exposed to life-threatening ailments.

Thousands of construction workers unwittingly put themselves at risk as they worked on Department of Energy (DOE) and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) nuclear sites involved in nuclear weapons research or production. While safety and health precautions are greatly improved from the early days during and after the Cold War, today's workers can still encounter hazardous materials in dust and residue and during demolition and remediation work. Workers were (and are) exposed to hazards such as radiation, asbestos, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead, silica, and solvents, which can cause cancer and other serious, even fatal, health problems.

Those who worked on DOE sites can get free medical screenings through the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed). BTMed is administered by The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR), the health and safety research

Covered Sites



center of North America's Building Trades Unions. The program is operated in partnership with Stoneturn Consultants, Duke University Medical Center, University of Maryland Medical Center, and Zenith-American Solutions.

BTMed also operates an Early Lung Cancer Detection Program (ELCD) that uses the most advanced low-dose computed tomography (CT) scans. The ELCD program is designed to detect lung cancers at an early stage, while they can be treated effectively. More than 41,000 medical screenings and 6,400 low-dose CT scans have been delivered using a national network of providers.

Participation will not only benefit participants themselves, but future workers, by helping to identify trends in groupings of information that may be important to their health and well-being.

What tests found in the workers

BTMed has found that 19.2% of 22,779 participants who had chest X-rays showed signs of work-related lung disease; nearly 40% of 22,440 participants who took pulmonary function tests showed signs of obstructive disease; 65% of 20,927 participants who took hearing tests were found to have hearing loss for normal speech tones; 2.2% of 21,589 participants who took a beryllium lymphocyte proliferation test had a least one abnormality; and lung cancer was detected in 39 of 1,644 DOE workers tested. Of the 39 individuals found with lung cancers, 31 had an early stage lung cancer (carcinoma in situ, Stage I or Stage II non-small cell cancer or limited small cell cancer) at the time of diagnosis.

How the free screening program works

The BTMed program consists of three steps in this order: participation agree-

ment, a work history interview, and a medical exam. In step one, workers who are interested call 1-800-866-9663 to enroll. In step two, a specially-trained worker conducts a work history interview to determine what exposures to hazardous materials the worker may have had. In step three, the worker receives a free medical examination to test for illnesses that may have resulted from exposure, as well as other health problems. Following the exam, the worker receives a letter indicating any medical findings and which of those findings could be work related. If a compensable illness is discovered, the worker may file a claim with the Department of Labor under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. The Act offers workers medical coverage for the illness from the date the claim was filed,

and a compensation lump-sum payment. In addition, the program will assist participants who want to file claims for workers' compensation for any work-related problem.

More information on the program can be found at www.dol.gov/owcp/energy.

Workers who have been screened are invited back for a re-screening three years later. Workers are encouraged to do so because BTMed is finding significant newly-diagnosed disease in participants who are re-screened.

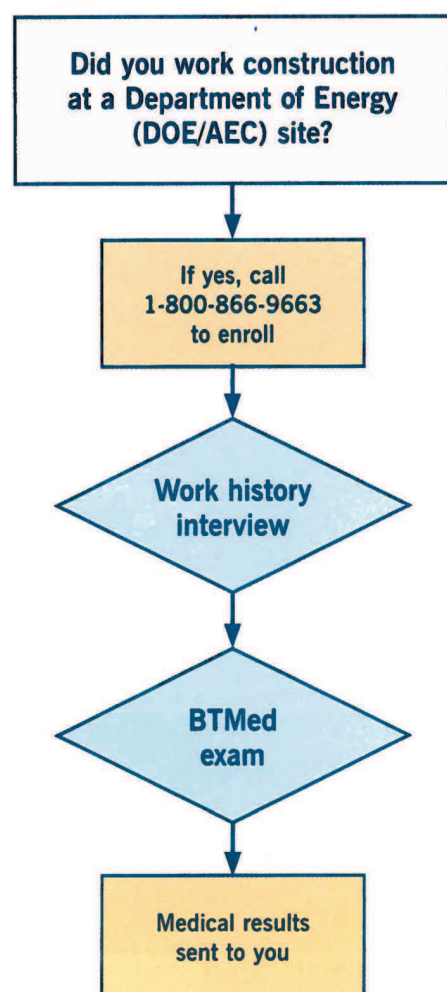
To date, 4,660 construction workers who worked at Hanford have had initial exams, with 2,300 having re-screen exams.

At the Albany Research Center, BTMed is targeting trades workers who worked on site from 1987 to 1993 (remediation) or 1995 – present. They are having trouble locating workers from this site and have screened fewer than five workers.

As the COVID-19 situation develops, BTMed will continue to enroll workers and conduct work history interviews over the phone, but they have suspended medical screening services, said Patricia Quinn of CPWR.

"We hope to be back up and running in certain parts of the country in the next few weeks, early June for the Oregon and Washington area," she told the Labor Press.

If you worked at Hanford, call Sherry Gosseen at the Hanford Outreach Office at 1-509-542-9347. If you worked elsewhere, call BTMed at 1-800-866-9663 or go online for more information at www.btmed.org or go to Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BTMed/>



Who is Eligible?

You may be eligible to participate in this program if:

- You performed construction work (for either the prime contractor or subcontractors) at any time in the past at Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) or Department of Energy (DOE) sites associated with the research or production of nuclear weapons.
- You think you may have been exposed to any health hazards, including radiation, beryllium, asbestos, silica, mercury, cadmium, nickel, lead, uranium, plutonium or other heavy metals, solvents or degreasers, or any other fumes, vapors or dusts, noise.
- You or your doctor think you have had serious health problems as a result of your DOE work, including anyone who has or has had cancer, serious lung disease or any other serious illness that you think could be caused by toxic exposures or radiation. A recent BTMed study found that DOE workers have a significantly increased risk for occupational illnesses over all time periods. Mortality was elevated for all causes: asbestosis; all cancers, including those of the bronchus, hematopoietic, lung and lymphatic systems, and the trachea; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; mesothelioma; transportation injuries; and other injuries, particularly those caused by accidental poisoning, a possible effect of the opioid epidemic.