

FLAG VOICE #485

Update: Medical Documentation of Shipboard Lead/Asbestos Exposure

The Coast Guard is committed to Duty to People both while members are in service to the Coast Guard and when they transition away from active or reserve military duty.

Please help me spread the word that Coast Guard military members assigned to cutters that were constructed prior to 1991 may have been exposed to very low levels of asbestos and lead. Routine exposure for asbestos and lead would include working on and berthing in a Coast Guard cutter where there may be small exposed areas of asbestos-containing thermal insulation, a number of torn asbestos-containing floor tiles, and lead dust from lead ballast ingots and lead-containing paint. Exceptional exposures may have occurred during certain maintenance procedures (e.g. tearing up entire floor surfaces of asbestos-containing floor tiles and torching or sanding surfaces painted with lead-containing paint) without the use of personal protective equipment.

Coast Guard Active Duty and Selected Reserve (AD/SELRES) crew member exposures to asbestos and lead were addressed in ALCOAST 364/17. In order to ensure that Coast Guard members who have separated or retired from the Coast Guard with a prior permanent duty assignment on a Coast Guard cutter constructed prior to 1991 understand what steps to take, [ALCOAST 090/18](#) provides additional information if they are filing a Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation claim related to asbestos and/or lead exposure. The ALCOAST additionally refers these individuals to the following website <http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/asbestos/> for additional guidance. This guidance is extremely important in ensuring our people are taken care of well after they separate or retire from the Coast Guard.

Coast Guard retiree messaging on this subject will be via: a) an email message to individuals on the Coast Guard retiree e-distribution list (within one week of the release of ALCOAST 090/18); and b) a message in the April 1, 2018 issue of The Retiree Newsletter (USCG-PHS-NOAA).

The Coast Guard Health Services community will be fully apprised of this subject so that questions from Coast Guard veterans and retirees can be appropriately answered. If you have specific questions, please contact our Chief of Operational Medicine, CAPT Jerry Taylor at (202) 475-5211 or Gerald.N.Taylor@uscg.mil.



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