

Did you participate in WTC rescue, recovery, or clean-up operations after 9/11?

Have you ever filed a WTC-12 Form to protect your rights to file a WTC-related NYS Workers' Compensation claim?

If you participated in the rescue, recovery and clean-up of the World Trade Center through September 12, 2002, please register your service with the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. This will preserve your right to future benefits, should you ever need them.

The deadline to register is September 11, 2018. But if you haven't registered already, you should do so now.

This is not a new program, but the deadline was extended last year. We want to make sure all CWA Local 1101 members who worked at Ground Zero have registered. The registration form can be found at <http://www.wcb.ny.gov>.

You should file a WTC-12 form whether you were injured or not, and whether you were employed or volunteered. This includes duty at Ground Zero, Fresh Kills Landfill, the barges, the piers, and the morgues.

Other WTC programs

The World Trade Center Health Program 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund ("VCF")

If you were affected by 9/11 as part of the response and recovery efforts or if you lived or worked in the WTC vicinity and have 9/11 health concerns, you can apply to the World Trade Center Health Program and you may be eligible for VCF benefits. CWA District 1 recommends that all eligible CWA members take advantage of these important programs.

The **World Trade Center Health Program** consists of WTC Clinical Centers of Excellence in the NY metropolitan area, including NYC, Long Island, and NJ. The WTC Health Program has separate programs for responders and survivors. The responder program provides free, yearly medical monitoring, and treatment if needed, for 9/11 conditions covered by the program, as well as benefits counseling. You do not have to be sick to participate in the responder program. The survivor program provides treatment and benefits counseling for survivors with 9/11-related illnesses. There is also a National Program to cover WTC-related health care throughout the country. You can learn more about the WTC Health Program at <http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/index.html>.

The **September 11th Victim Compensation Fund ("VCF")** was created to provide financial compensation for an eligible individual (or a personal representative of a deceased individual) who suffered physical harm or was killed as a result of the

terrorist-related aircraft crashes of September 11, 2001 or the rescue and recovery efforts that took place in the aftermath of those crashes.

The purpose of the VCF (which originally closed in 2004) was to compensate those people who died or became disabled as a result of the terrorist attack as well as those who were involved in the debris removal immediately after the attacks. The definition of “debris removal” covers those first responders who were involved in clean up, recovery, remediation and response during the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack. The “immediate aftermath” covers the period of 9/11/01-8/20/02.

Since 2002 however, many first responders who were exposed to the debris after the attack died or have become seriously ill.

In the years following the 9/11 attacks, nearly 70 types of rare and aggressive cancers have been linked to dust and toxic substance exposure at Ground Zero. Experts estimate as many as 400,000 people are suffering from diseases linked to 9/11, including cancers and mental illnesses. As of July, 2016 an additional 1,140 people (rescue workers and those who worked or lived near the site) have died.

In an attempt to compensate people whose illness or deaths related to 9/11 attacks were diagnosed after the 2004 deadline, the Victim Compensation Fund was extended with the passage of the Zadroga Act - named after a NYC Police Officer who died due to respiratory disease as a result of his exposure to toxic chemicals. The Zadroga Act reopened and extended the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) until December 18, 2020.

In addition to the VCF, the Act created the World Trade Center Health Program which provides free medical coverage to those who suffer from certain recognized illnesses. **The extension means that people now have until December 18, 2020 to submit claims.**

However, the date you must register with the VCF varies depending upon your individual circumstances. Registering with the VCF is different than filing a claim with the VCF. The VCF is a federal fund separate from any NYS Workers' Compensation benefits that a disabled worker may be entitled to receive. Generally, the VCF requires 9/11 victims to register with the VCF no later than two years after the effected individual is made aware that their illness(s) are a result of the 9/11 terror attack. If you or a loved one has been diagnosed within the last two years, it's not too late to file a claim.

The CWA District 1 Health and Safety office has maintained numerous documents collected from employers and members in the months after 9/11. These documents may help some members in establishing eligibility and “proof of presence” for the WTC Health Program and the VCF.

Please contact CWA District 1 Health and Safety Director, Micki Siegel de Hernández at (212) 509-6994 or msiegel@cwa-union.org for information and help.