

NEWS RELEASE



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HELP FOR THOUSANDS SERIOUSLY INJURED AT WORK

Thousands of people with serious industrial diseases who miss out because they cannot trace their employers' insurance records should be able to claim compensation following Government proposals announced today.

In a consultation paper the DWP sets out plans to create an Employers' Liability Tracing Office to help people track down their employers' liability insurance policies, and an Employers' Liability Insurance Bureau to provide a fund of last resort for those who are unable to trace them.

The proposed tracing office will incorporate an electronic database of employers' liability insurance policies, which should make it easier to track down these records and improve the existing tracing service.

The consultation will consider how the tracing office could be best managed and funded. It will also look at the scope of help that could be provided by an employers liability insurance bureau, the timing of claims and how much compensation could be paid. It will also examine what more employers can do to meet their obligations to maintain employers' liability compulsory insurance.

DWP Minister Lord McKenzie said:

“Far too many people suffering from serious industrial diseases are unable to trace their insurance polices and get the compensation they deserve.

“That is why we want to set up a better tracing service with a dedicated database to help them track down these policies, and a fund of last resort if all else fails.

“We will continue to work with insurance bodies, trade unions and campaign groups to ensure all those affected get the help they need.”

Where a person is injured or made ill through their work, as a result of the employer’s negligence they would normally claim civil damages from the employer.

However, a number of people have been unable to trace their employers’ liability insurance policy and make a claim. This is because some industrial diseases only appear decades later when employers may have ceased trading or they may have not kept old insurance records or lost them.

A voluntary Code of Practice for tracing Employers’ Liability insurance policies, set up in 1999 has led to some improvements, but many individuals are still left without help.

Notes to Editors

The consultation, ‘Accessing Compensation – supporting people who need to trace Employers’ Liability Insurance’, is available at www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations

When it’s not possible to claim civil compensation for people with certain lung diseases, including mesothelioma, the Government provides help through the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers’ Compensation) Act 1979 and 2008 Mesothelioma Scheme.

Media Enquiries: 0203 267 5120
Out of hours: 07659 108883
Website: www.dwp.gov.uk

