

ANNOUNCEMENT

Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
Richland, Washington 99352

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Issued: 3/17/98

To: ALL HANFORD EMPLOYEES

Subject: HANFORD HEALTH STUDIES

The increase in health studies relating to the Hanford Site and the public visibility associated with them, may have generated some confusion and misunderstanding about these projects. This announcement will give you an overview of Hanford health studies conducted by universities and other agencies, what they mean to you, and how we protect your privacy.

Some of the studies are a response to a Congressional mandate (Defense Authorization Act of 1993, Section 3162) and a continuing interest to effectively meet the occupational health care needs of current U.S. Department of Energy employees. The general intent of these studies is to evaluate workers' exposures and potential health risks, and link these findings to preventive measures including medical screening programs for those workers found to be at significant risk for work related health problems.

The information obtained from these studies will help us:

- 1) identify individuals and groups of workers who may have health or safety risks as a result of potential exposures to hazardous substances
- 2) identify potential hazards the employee may be exposed to and ensure that appropriate safety training and personal protective equipment is provided
- 3) help determine the need for targeted medical monitoring programs for former and current workers.

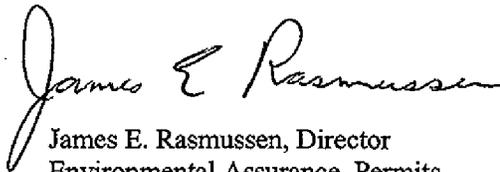
It is important to understand that in the performance of these U.S. Department of Energy-sanctioned studies, employee information can be provided under the routine use clause of the Privacy Act of 1974 to health researchers carrying out these studies. Existing U.S. Department of Energy-owned databases at Hanford are being used to identify, locate, and contact potential study participants. Examples of the types of information needed are personal and work identifiers, work history, health information, and exposure history.

We fully understand the importance of ensuring your privacy and critical safeguards are in place and are strictly adhered to. As a condition of releasing individual information, researchers must provide the U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office with a written statement that they comply with provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974. In addition, these studies required review and approval by both the institutional review boards of the research institution and the site-specific board at Hanford (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) to ensure the protection of privacy.

As a current employee you may be contacted by a health study researcher as a potential participant in a study. Any participation by you in these studies is voluntary. All participants are asked to sign a consent form, which acknowledges their willingness to enroll in a study. A signed consent form ensures that the participant is aware of the purpose, benefits, and procedures of the particular study and that the risks, stress, and discomfort associated with the study have been reviewed.

In order to identify workers who may be at risk from hazards at Hanford and who may wish to be enrolled in a study, it will be necessary for researchers to gain access to individual worker exposure and medical records. Workers who are identified in this way are free to choose whether or not to participate in these studies and may withdraw from these projects at any time.

If you are asked and choose not to participate in any studies or if you do not want to be contacted by health study researchers, please notify Roger Briggs, Hanford Health Studies Clearinghouse on 509-376-5416.



James E. Rasmussen, Director
Environmental Assurance, Permits,
and Policy Division

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