Specialty Records/ WEA Mfg/ Cinram/ Technicolor
Cancer Cluster Investigation
The Price of Entertainment
Created By: Lackawanna Citizens' Overwatch Project
www.LackawannaCitizensOverwatchProject.com

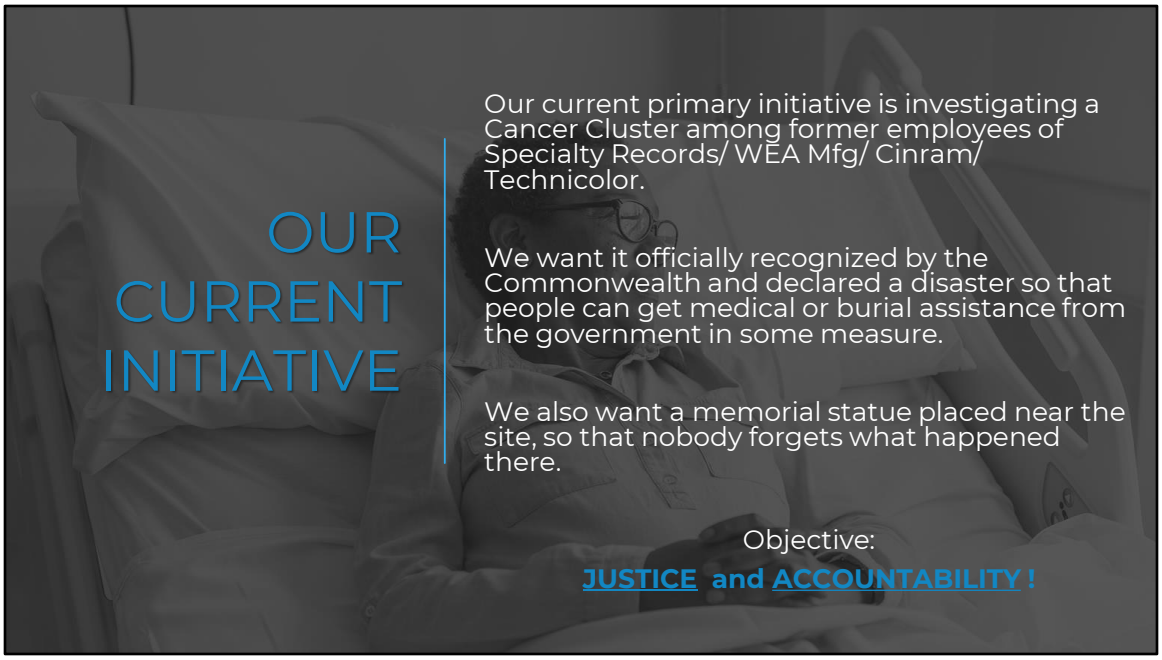
cinram
wea
SPECIALTY RECORDS
CORPORATION
technicolor

ABOUT US
Lackawanna Citizens' Overwatch Project is a small grassroots citizens' action committee dedicated to exposing and eliminating local corruption and corporate negligence in Lackawanna County, PA.
We operate as a nonprofit advocacy group, committed to transparency and community engagement.
We provide a platform for citizens to report, monitor, and discuss local corruption, industrial exposure, and environmental pollution.
Together, we can bring justice and awareness to those who have suffered and ensure that no voice goes unheard!

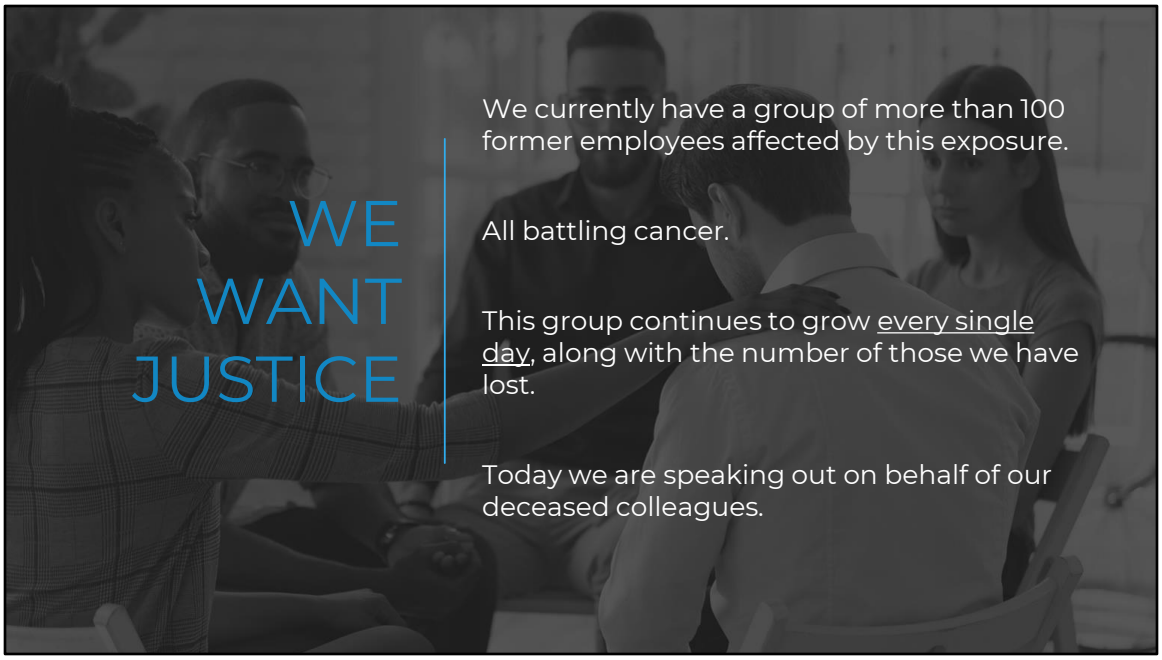
OUR MISSION

We are dedicated to enhancing community awareness and safety while advocating for victims of corporate misconduct and environmental harm.

Through education, activism, and direct action, we aim to empower residents to challenge injustices and seek meaningful change.



For those of you who are not familiar, Specialty Records/ WEA Mfg/ Cinram/ Technicolor were all run out of the same building. The employees and work remained the same, while just the name on the outside of the building kept changing.


WE
WANT
JUSTICE
We currently have a group of more than 100 former employees affected by this exposure.
All battling cancer.
This group continues to grow every single day, along with the number of those we have lost.
Today we are speaking out on behalf of our deceased colleagues.

To get added to the list if you are a former employee who has been diagnosed with a cancer-related illness or if you know of a former employee who passed away from a cancer-related illness, please email lcopactionnetwork@gmail.com (That's LCOP Action Network).

MOC's - Metallic Organic Compounds (Metallic Pollutants)
VOC's - Volatile Organic Compounds (Air/Water Pollutants)

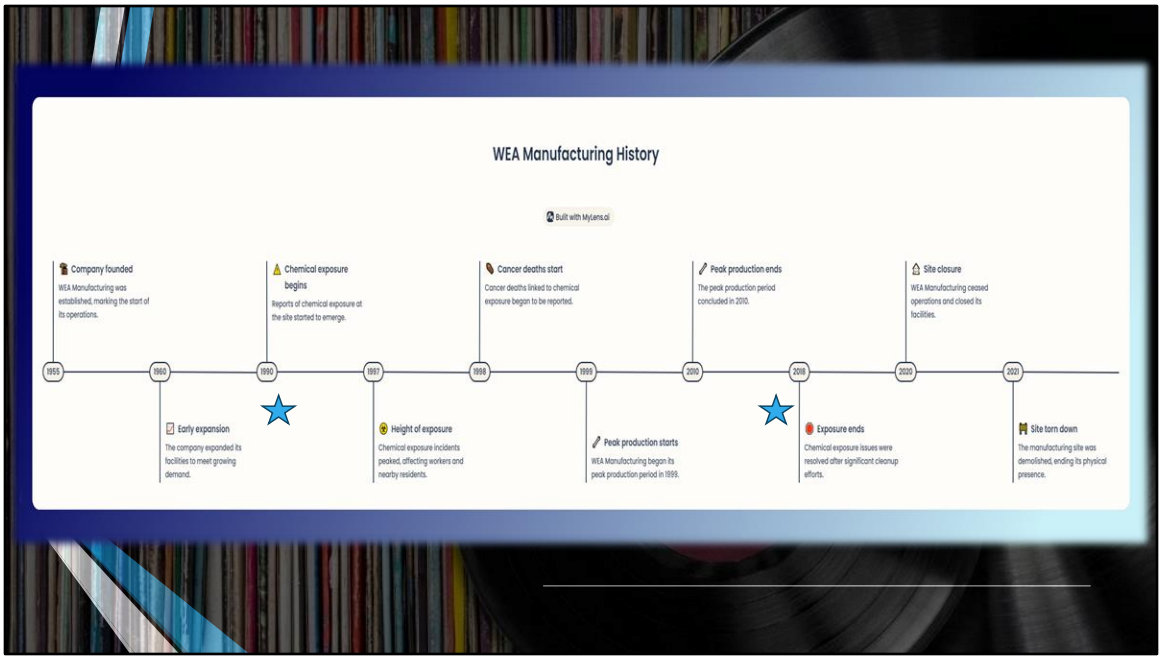
FUNDRAISING

Unfortunately, that leaves us with nearly 200 deaths where the cause of death remains "**unknown**".

Our Fundraising Goal is to hire a private investigator who will help determine the cause of death for our "unknown" and identify any additional victims.

We are selling **Rubber Awareness Bracelets for $5.00 each** and **Enamel Lavender Cancer Survivor Pins for $3.00 each**

We are **seeking financial support** to assist with funding this critical investigation. **100% of the proceeds** from the merchandise sale will go towards hiring the private investigator we need.

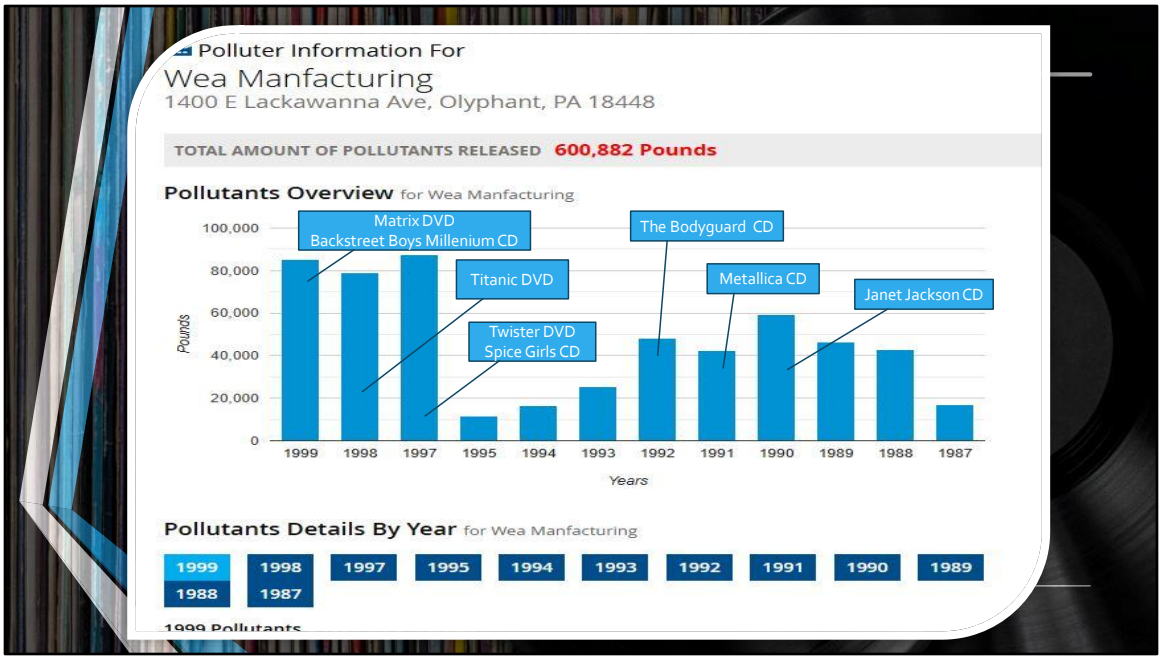


The Company was founded in 1946 and produced Records under the Specialty Records brand. Records, cassettes, and 8 tracks evolved into CD production in 1990 and then DVD production in 1997.

During its height, WEA Mfg employed approximately ***4,000 full time employees as well as countless temp workers***. The Olyphant facility was a key part of **Warner Music Group's** distribution infrastructure, originally part of **Warner-Elektra-Atlantic (WEA).** It produced physical media for major labels including **Warner Bros., Elektra, and Atlantic Records**, and for third-party clients. WEA Manufacturing's DVD division, known as **Warner Advanced Media Operations (WAMO)**, played a pivotal role in the development of the DVD format.

Between 1985 and 2018, employees were exposed to countless **Metallic Organic Compounds (MOC's) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's).**

In 2023, when this disaster took my father, I began an investigation that not only revealed what we were all exposed to but other sinister failures that contributed to the deaths of hundreds!



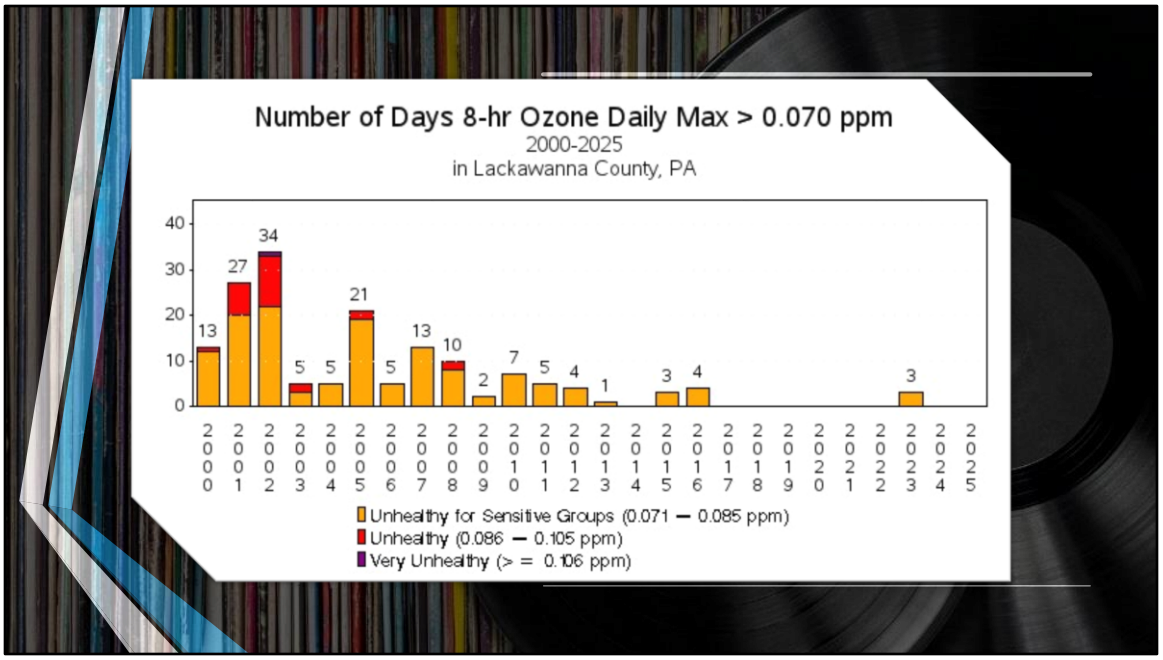
You can see how the pollutants drop off a bit in 1993 to 1995 as demand for CD's began to wain a bit. Then you can see a spike in 1997 with the roll out of mass DVD sales. **1997:** DVD players and movies were first released in the United States. The facility reportedly produced **several hundred thousand DVDs per day**. The big seller in 1997 was Twister and it was one of the first titles ever available on DVD. The height of DVD production and the height of pollutants really emerged from 1997 onward.

Total Pollutants Released: **600,882 pounds** of pollutants were released over this charts 12-year span.

Years Covered: The chart includes data from **1987 through 1999**, with a noticeable gap (no data for 1996 or 2000 onward).

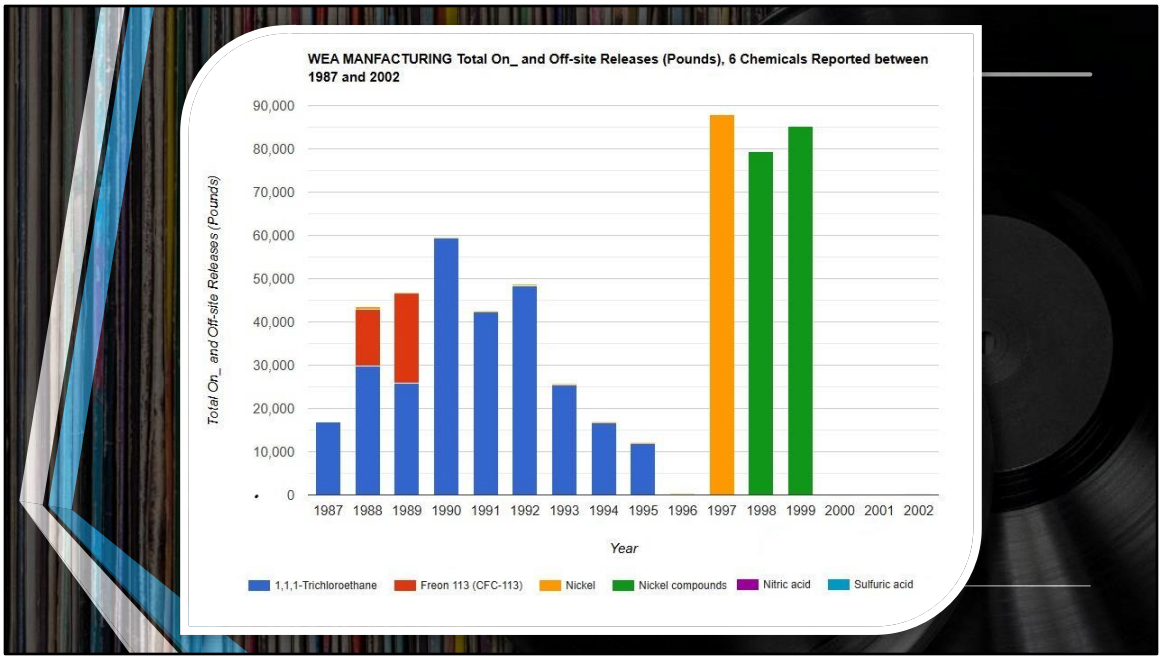
Top Emission Years: **1997**: Highest emission year (~88,000 pounds). **1999 & 1998**: Also very high (~85,000 and ~80,000 pounds respectively) These peak years are **right before the ozone spike in the early 2000s**, shown on the chart on the next page.

Yes, **600,882 pounds (300+ tons)** of pollutants released over a 12-year span is a significant amount — **especially depending on the type of pollutants, the size of the local population, and the proximity of releases to residential areas, schools, or waterways**.

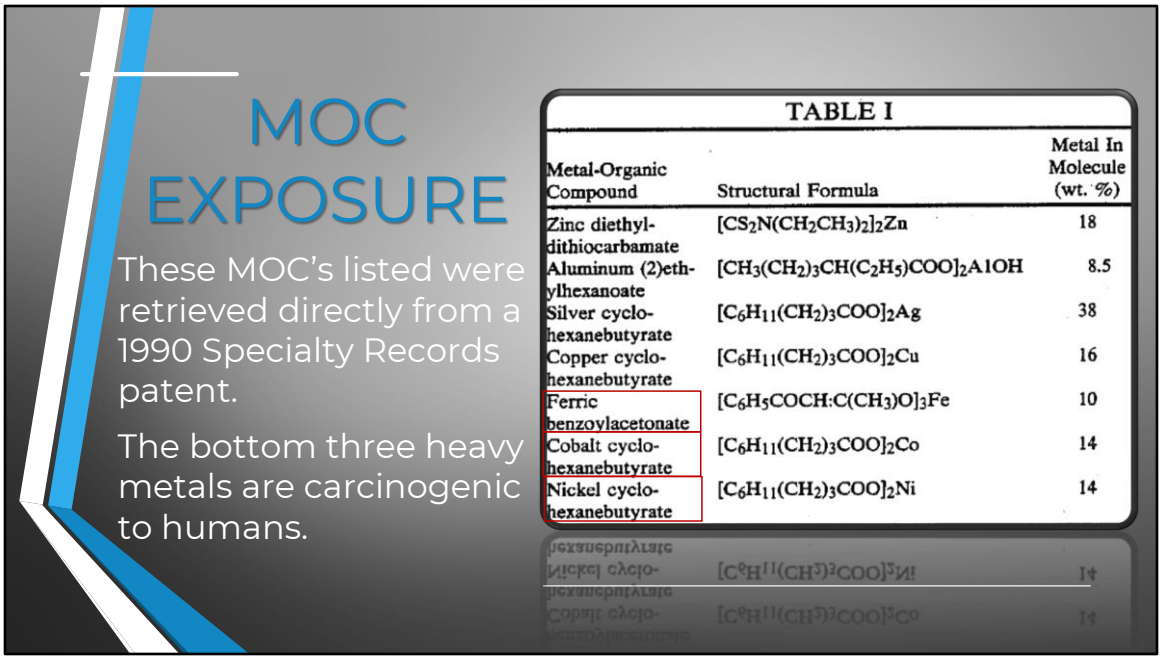


Unfortunately, I was only able to find the Air Quality Index dating back to year 2000 the earliest. However, look at the years 2000 to 2005, especially 2003. **“Very Unhealthy”** Again, this was all during the DVD production. Yes, it's plausible that the Specialty Records/WEA Manufacturing/Cinram/Technicolor facility, **significantly contributed to local ozone pollution spikes** in the early 2000s. This facility was a major industrial operation and at its peak, it employed over 2,300 people. The manufacturing processes involved in producing these media formats often utilize various chemicals and solvents that emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx)—both of which are precursors to ground-level ozone formation. **Given the facility's size and the nature of its operations, it's reasonable to consider it a significant source of these emissions during that period.**

What is "8-Hour Ozone"?
Think of it like this: Scientists **measure how much ozone is in the air every hour**. The **"8-hour ozone"** is the **average level** over **8 hours.** It’s used to judge **how harmful the air is for breathing**. When the 8-hour average is in the “unhealthy” range, **air quality alerts are issued, and people are told to stay indoors.**

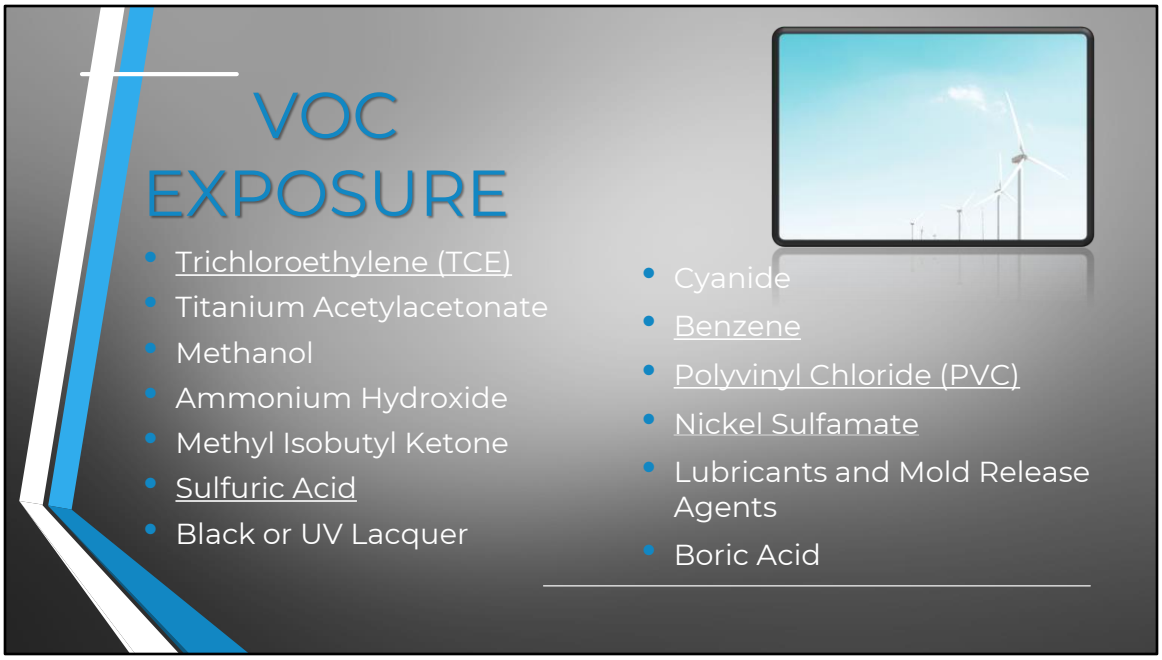


This chart shows how much of each chemical was **released into the environment,** either directly **on-site** (into the air, water, or land) or **off-site** (to treatment or disposal facilities). High releases mean more pollution. You see large releases of **1,1,1-Trichloroethane** (linked to neurological and liver effects) from 1987–1995, **Nickel** in 1997 and **Nickel compounds** in 1998–1999 (both of those are classified as carcinogens).



Metallic Organic Compounds (MOC's) - Metallic Pollutants

1. **Ferric and its Compounds (Iron)** – Iron itself is not classified as a carcinogen. However, excessive iron accumulation in the body can contribute to oxidative stress, which may be linked to cancer development.
2. **Cobalt and Its Compounds** – Some cobalt compounds are classified as possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Prolonged exposure, especially through inhalation in industrial settings, has been associated with increased cancer risk.
3. **Nickel and Its Compounds** – Nickel compounds are classified as carcinogenic to humans (Group 1 by IARC). Chronic exposure, particularly to nickel dust and soluble nickel compounds, has been linked to lung and nasal cancers.



Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's) – Air/Water Pollutants

1. **Trichloroethylene (TCE)**:– Classified as a probable human carcinogen (Group 2A) by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Long-term exposure has been linked to kidney cancer and possibly non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
2. **Benzene** – A well-established human carcinogen (Group 1 by IARC). It is strongly linked to leukemia and other blood cancers.
3. **Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)** – While PVC itself is not classified as a carcinogen, its manufacturing and breakdown can release **vinyl chloride**, which is a known human carcinogen (Group 1 by IARC).
4. **Nickel Sulfamate** – Nickel compounds are classified as carcinogenic (Group 1 by IARC). Long-term exposure is linked to lung and nasal cancers.
5. **Sulfuric Acid (Strong Inorganic Acid Mists Containing Sulfuric Acid)** – While sulfuric acid itself is not inherently carcinogenic, exposure to **mists** containing it has been classified as a known human carcinogen (Group 1 by IARC) due to increased risks of lung and laryngeal cancer.

The other chemicals on the list (Titanium Acetylacetonate, Methanol, Ammonium Hydroxide, MIBK, Black Lacquer, Cyanide, Lubricants, Mold Release Agents, and Boric Acid) are not classified as carcinogens, though they may pose other health risks such as toxicity, irritation, or long-term organ damage.

VOC'S ANNUALLY

According to the Right to Know paperwork, here are some examples of their annual VOC output:

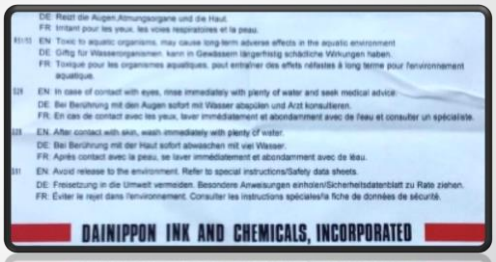
2000 – 41.7 tons
2001 – 98.9 tons
2002 – 39.4 tons
2003 – 38.1 tons
2004 – 46.45 tons
2005 – 46.89 tons

Depending on facility size and location, anything between 25 – 40 ton a year can be considered high to the DEP.

UV LACQUER LABEL

Irritant

Dangerous for the Environment

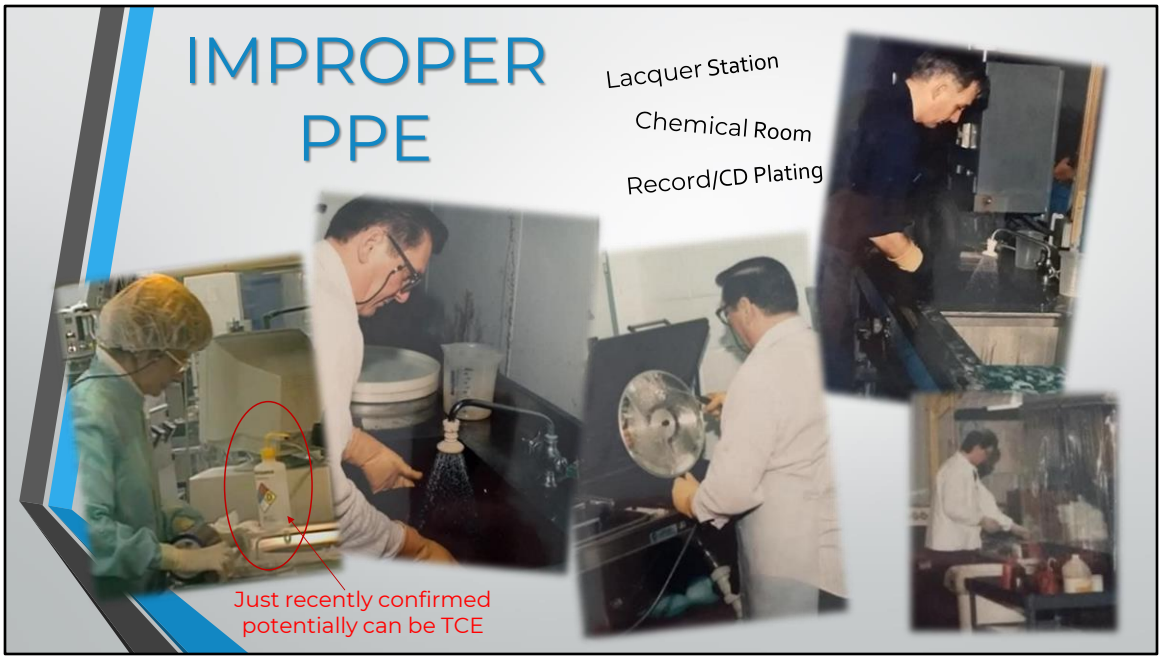


- **Toxic to aquatic organisms may cause long-term adverse effects in the aquatic environment.**
- **In case of contact with eyes, rinse immediately with plenty of water and seek medical advice.**
- **After contact with skin, wash immediately with plenty of water.**
- **Avoid release to the environment. Refer to special instructions Safety data sheets.**

We have Facebook comments from former employees who worked in the Central Processing Department that delt with this substance daily. The only way to clean it was to use a de-greaser (which was TCE and isopropyl alcohol) to wash it off your bare hands. One former employee states it got on everything, including your shoes, clothes, steering wheel, in the dryer with the family's clothes. Another former employee stated that his pillow would be rainbow colored when he would wake up in the morning. And another said they only wore those thin plastic gloves, and it would eat through them, and they would have to change them multiple times a day.

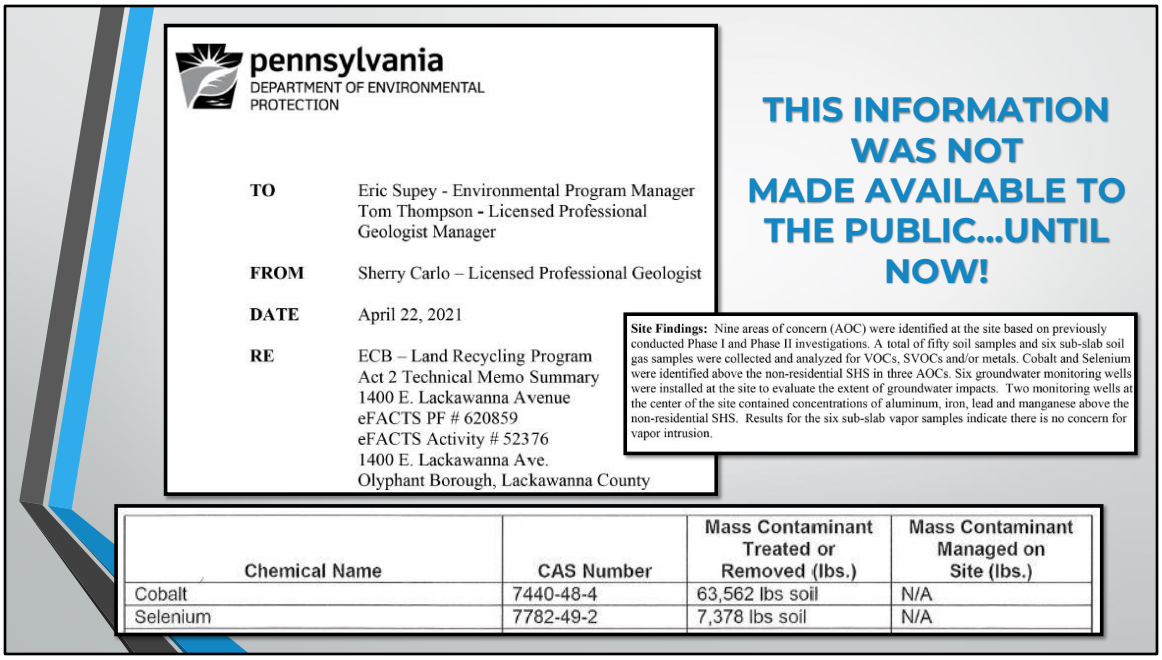
We need more people to come forward with similar examples!

This label confirms the presence of **environmentally toxic and irritant chemicals**, which might be part of the **hazardous substances released** from the facility.



Safe Handling Guidelines:

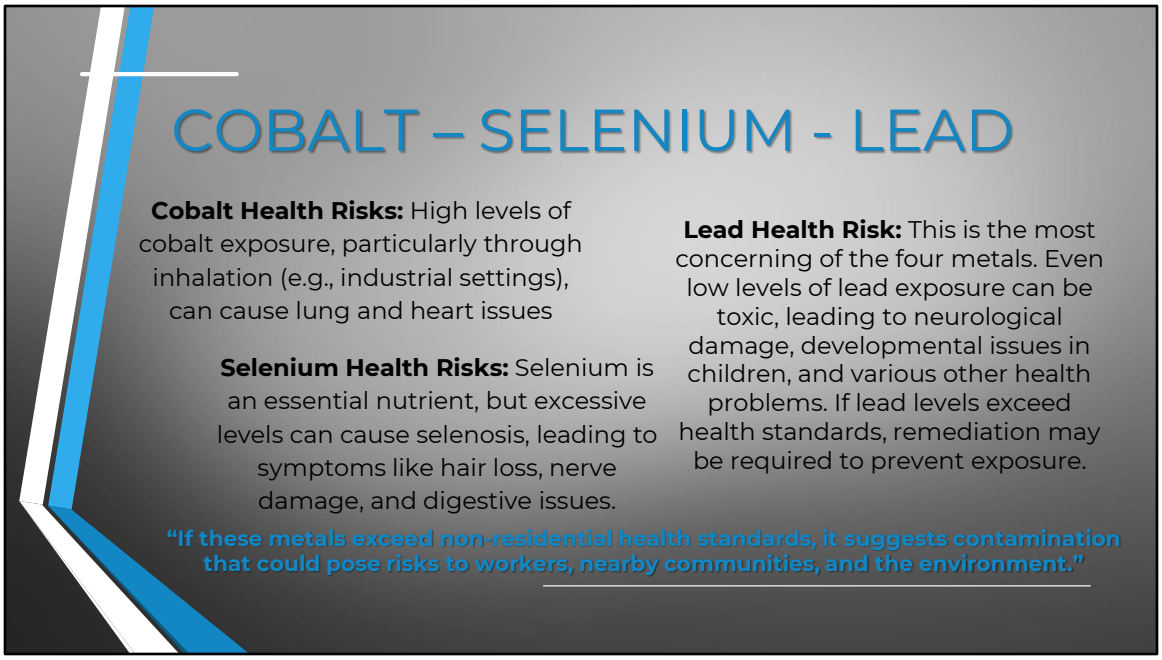
- **Tetrachloroethylene (TCE) Safety Measures**: Use in well-ventilated areas or fume hoods, wear gloves resistant to solvents (e.g., nitrile), avoid skin contact, and use respiratory protection if needed.
- **Benzene Safety Measures**: Strict containment, proper PPE (gloves, goggles, respirator if airborne), avoid inhalation and skin contact.
- **Nickel Sulfamate Safety Measures**: Use gloves, avoid inhalation (use dust masks if necessary), and practice good hygiene to prevent skin contact.



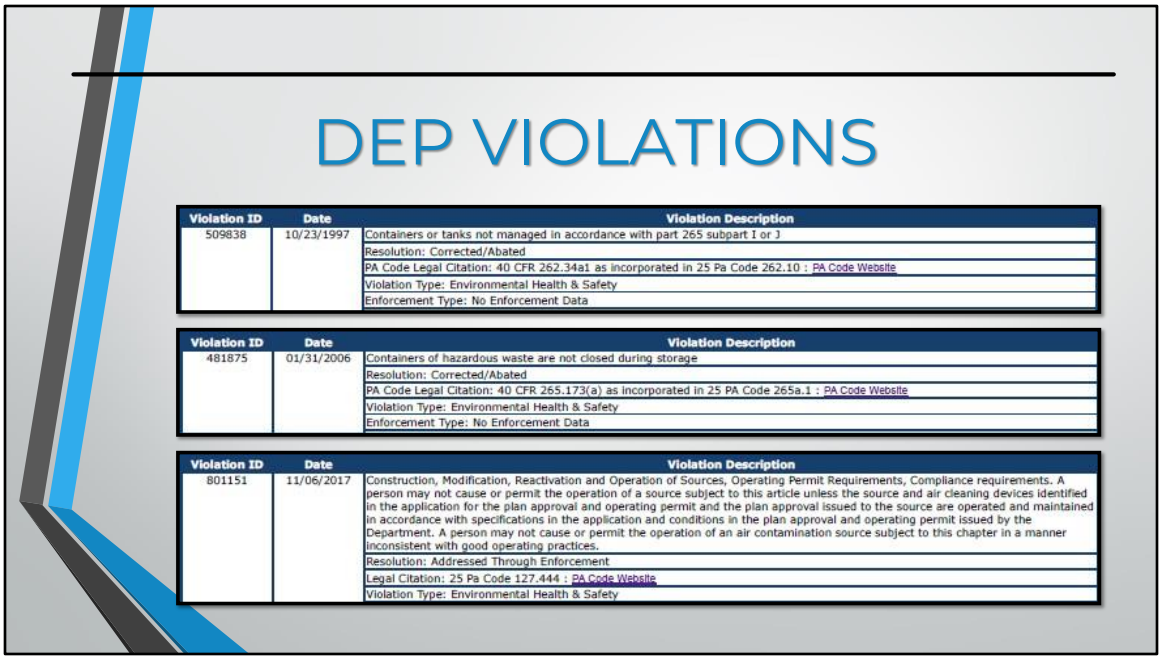
This is a 2021 memo from Geologist Sherry Carlo to the Environmental Program Manager describing the removal of toxic levels of **Cobalt and Selenium** from 99 acres of property totaling about 35 ton of soil. “9 areas of concern were identified at the site based on previously conducted phases. A total of 50 soil samples and 6 sub-slab soil gas samples were collected and analyzed… Cobalt and Selenium were identified above the non-residential statewide health standards (SHS) in 3 of the areas of concern…. 2 wells at the center of the site contained concentrations of **aluminum, iron, lead, and manganese** above the non-residential statewide health standards .”

This was provided to us from the Cartwright administration. We were unable to find this online ourselves. Meaning, there can potentially be more of these that are **NOT MADE AVAIALBE TO THE PUBLIC.**

This was from the 1400 E Lackawanna Ave site.



This test was performed in 2021. Imagine if they tested the soil while the plant was still in production!



The snapshots above show only some of the DEP violations on the facility inspections. These inspections have uncovered several violations over the years including **“Failure to prevent leakage of hazardous materials”, “Prevention and Contingency Plan not developed and implemented”, “Failure to submit emission statements”, and “Operation of an air contamination source subject manner inconsistent with good operating practices”** to name a few.

Astonishingly, the Level II inspections for the years 1998 to 2000 report “no violations”. This did not sit right with us since these two years were near the height of exposure, so we investigated the violation from 2001. We found a violation for **“Failure to obtain a plan approval for the construction or modification of a cleaning device”. (**Which was a violation again in 2017.)

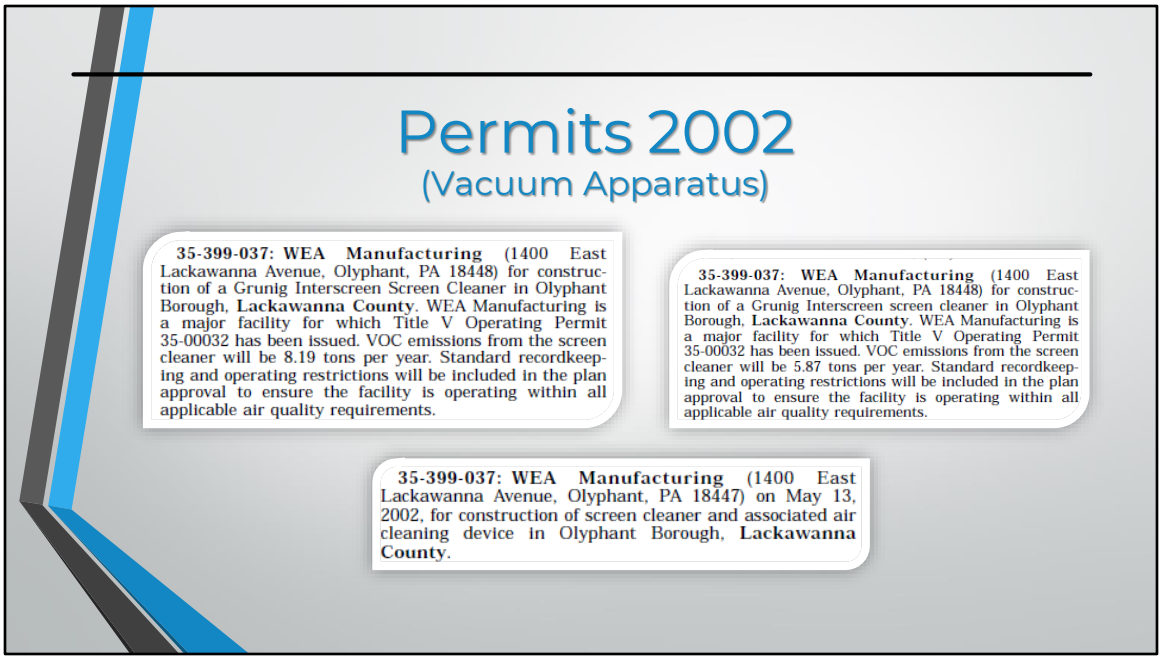
DEP VIOLATION 2001
(Vacuum Apparatus)

Violation ID	Date	Violation Description
274104	04/26/2001	Construction, Modification, Reactivation and Operation of Sources, Operating Permits, Monitoring and related recordkeeping and reporting requirements. Failure to comply with the submittal of monitoring and related recordkeeping and reporting requirements.
		Resolution: Corrected/Abated
		Legal Citation: 25 Pa Code 127.511 : PA Code Website
		Violation Type: Administrative
		Related Enforcements
		Please note: the following related enforcement data is accumulated from possibly many different sites/facilities that may be unrelated to the facility for this inspection.
		Enforcement ID: 94472 — Penalty Final Date:
		Enforcement Type: Consent Assessment of Civil Penalty — Penalty Amount Assessed: 2000
		Date Executed: 03/01/2002 — Total Amount Due: 0
		Taken Against: WARNER COMMUNICATIONS INC — Total Amount Collected: 2000
		On Appeal? N — Penalty Status:
		Enforcement Status: Comply/Closed
		# of Violations Addressed by this Enforcement and Penalty Action (possibly from many facilities): 4

1. Plan Approval Required for New Sources: **"A person may not cause or permit the construction or modification of an air contamination source or the installation of an air cleaning device unless the activity has been approved by the Department." WEA violated this by:** Installing a vacuum apparatus in the ventilation.

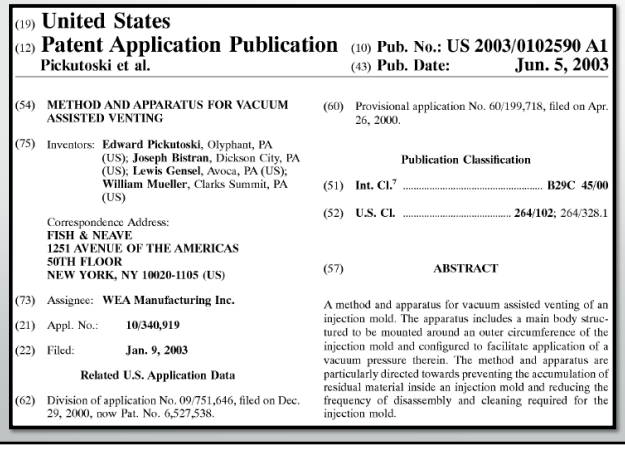
2. Operating Permit Required – **"This rule prohibits operating any stationary air contamination source without first obtaining a DEP-issued permit." WEA violated this by:** Operating the newly installed degreaser without an operating permit. Which means they are putting out more VOC's than they are reporting.

The state discovered the device, and they were **cited a mere $2,000** – the victims were not formally notified that all of this was occurring.



So therefore, they had to get a permit to legally operate the vacuum apparatus and the degreaser, which was pumping out an additional 13 VOC's a year. This did not get approved until 1 year later.

Patent 2003
(Vacuum Apparatus)



(19) **United States**
(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Pickutoski et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2003/0102590 A1**
(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 5, 2003**

(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VACUUM ASSISTED VENTING**

(75) Inventors: **Edward Pickutoski**, Olyphant, PA (US); **Joseph Bistran**, Dickson City, PA (US); **Lewis Gensel**, Avoca, PA (US); **William Mueller**, Clarks Summit, PA (US)

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1251 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
50TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10020-1105 (US)

(73) Assignee: **WEA Manufacturing Inc.**

(21) Appl. No.: **10/340,919**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 9, 2003**

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 09/751,646, filed on Dec. 29, 2000, now Pat. No. 6,527,538.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/199,718, filed on Apr. 26, 2000.

Publication Classification

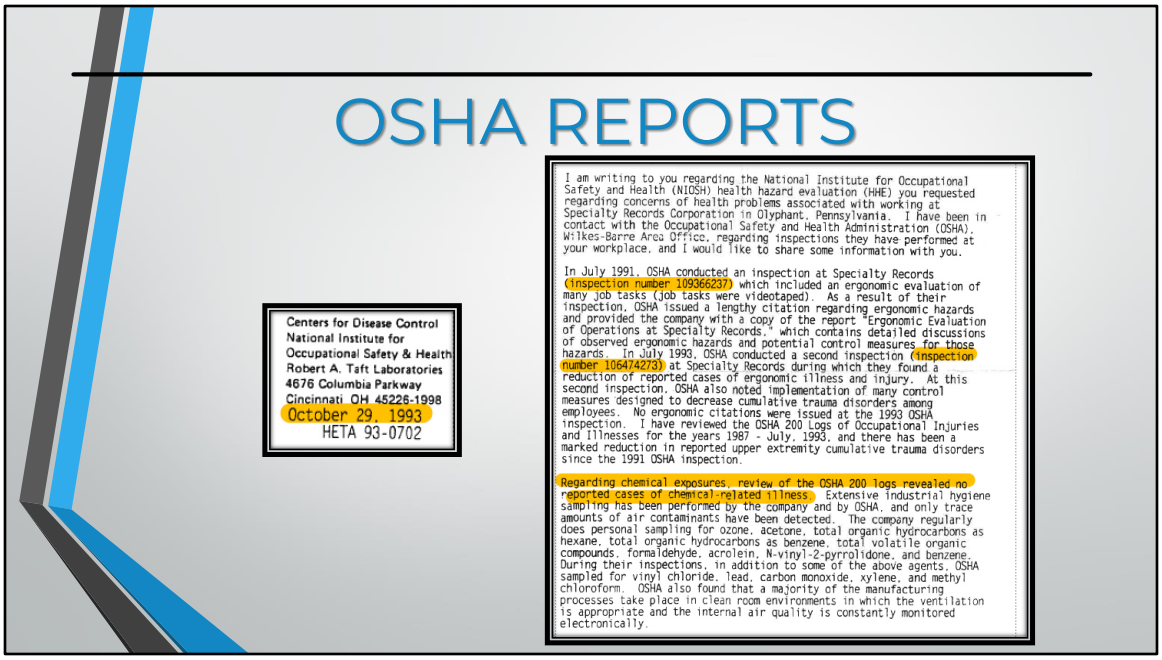
(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **B29C 45/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **264/102**; 264/328.1

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for vacuum assisted venting of an injection mold. The apparatus includes a main body structured to be mounted around an outer circumference of the injection mold and configured to facilitate application of a vacuum pressure therein. The method and apparatus are particularly directed towards preventing the accumulation of residual material inside an injection mold and reducing the frequency of disassembly and cleaning required for the injection mold.

In 2003 the patent for the vacuum apparatus was finally approved and legally installed. So, keep in mind, that's 2 years after the DEP violation.

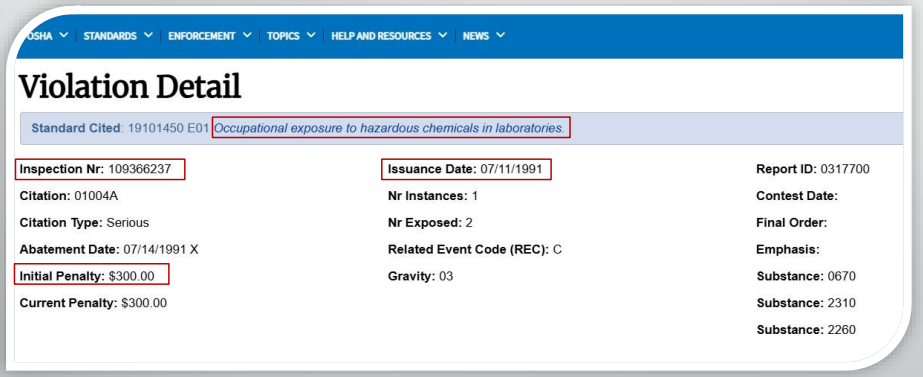


This letter from the Department of Health and Human Services and OSHA is their response after a former employee made a complaint of chemical exposure causing health issues. In this letter, it refers to two different inspection numbers, one from 1991 and another from 1993. It also states that, "Regarding chemical exposures, review of the OSHA 200 logs revealed no reported cases of chemical-related illness." Please see the next slides, where there was most certainty chemical exposures.

Also note, these are just 3 examples of OSHA complaints, we have dozens of complaints ranging from 1976 to 2004.

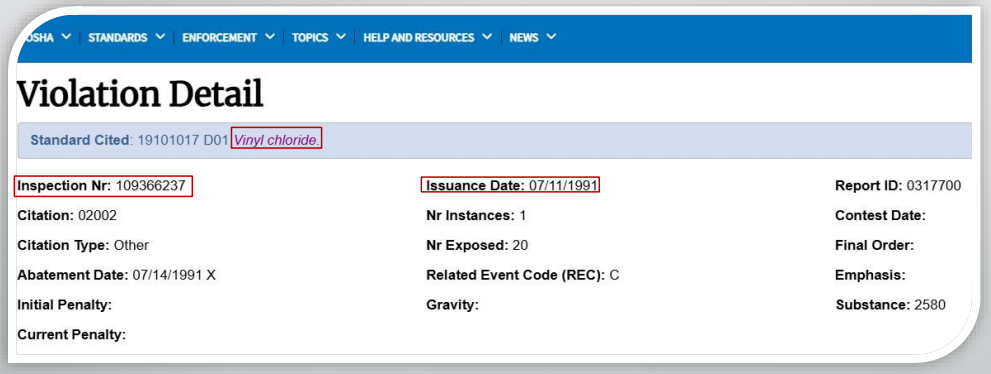
This letter was provided to us from the spouse of the former employee who has now since passed away from cancer. We need more people to dig up old paperwork and come forward with it!

OSHA REPORTS



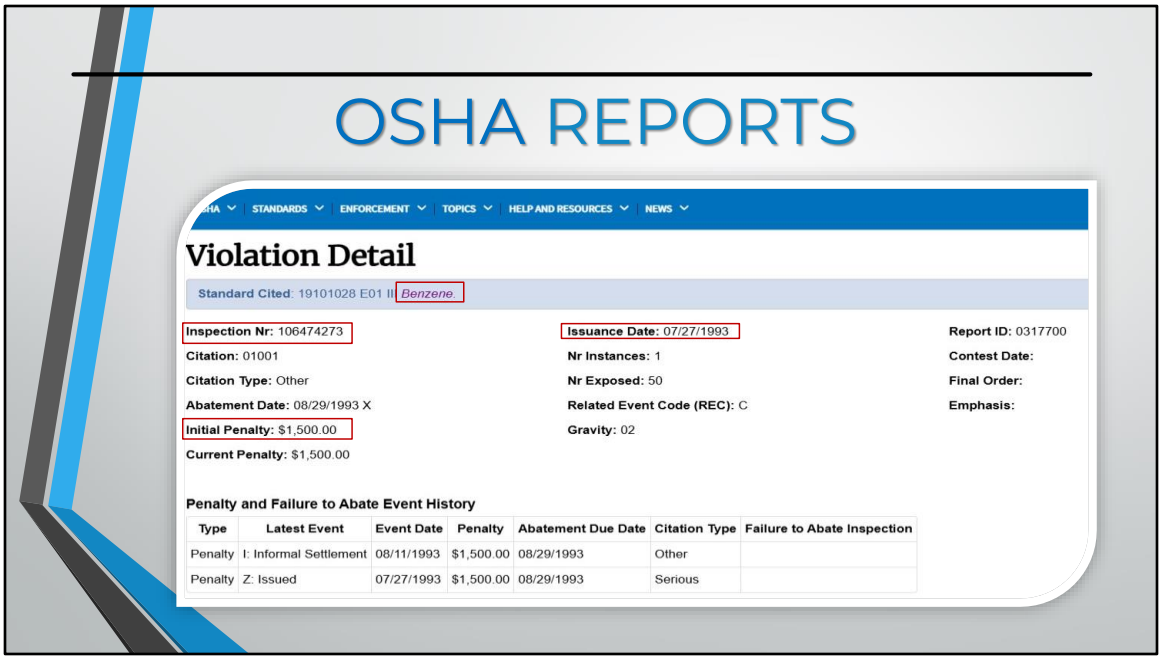
This report contradicts the Department of Health and Human Services and OSHA report from the previous slide. It says in 1991 there was an OSHA complaint for **"Occupational exposure to hazardous chemicals in laboratories"**. The fine was $300.

OSHA REPORTS



This report contradicts the Department of Health and Human Services and OSHA report from the previous slide. This is a continuation of the previous complaint, saying **the hazardous chemical was Vinyl Chloride,** which is carcinogenic.

OSHA REPORTS



STANDARDS | ENFORCEMENT | TOPICS | HELP AND RESOURCES | NEWS

Violation Detail

Standard Cited: 19101028 E01 II *Benzene.*

Inspection Nr: 106474273
Citation: 01001
Citation Type: Other
Abatement Date: 08/29/1993 X
Initial Penalty: $1,500.00
Current Penalty: $1,500.00

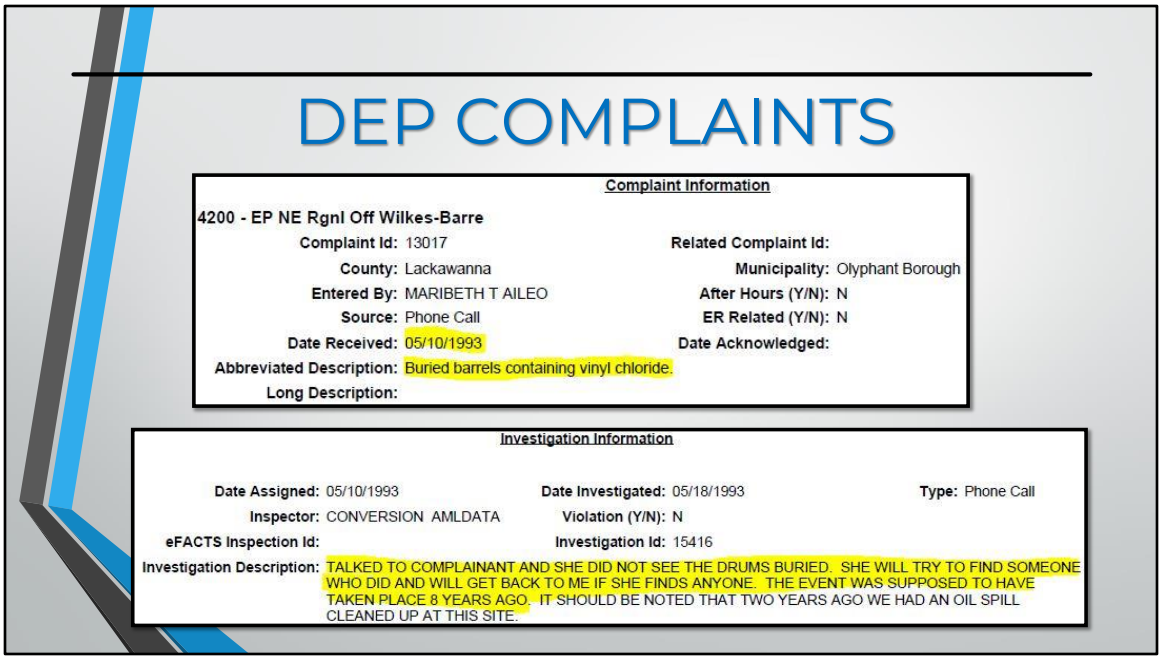
Issuance Date: 07/27/1993
Nr Instances: 1
Nr Exposed: 50
Related Event Code (REC): C
Gravity: 02

Report ID: 0317700
Contest Date:
Final Order:
Emphasis:

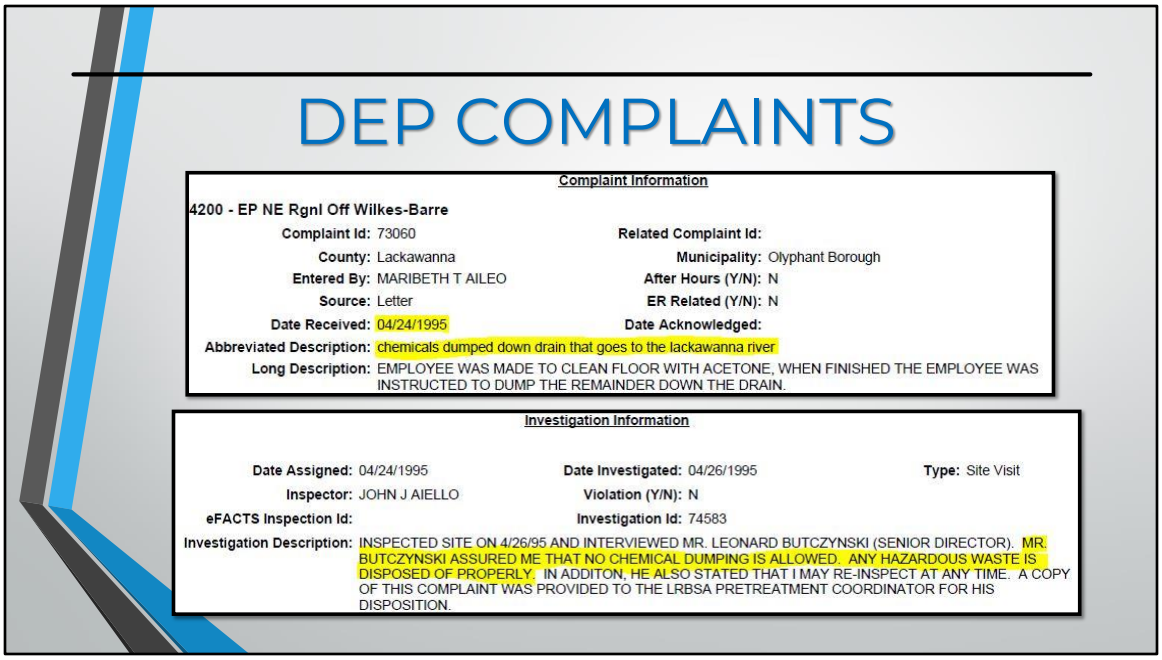
Penalty and Failure to Abate Event History

Type	Latest Event	Event Date	Penalty	Abatement Due Date	Citation Type	Failure to Abate Inspection
Penalty	I: Informal Settlement	08/11/1993	$1,500.00	08/29/1993	Other	
Penalty	Z: Issued	07/27/1993	$1,500.00	08/29/1993	Serious	

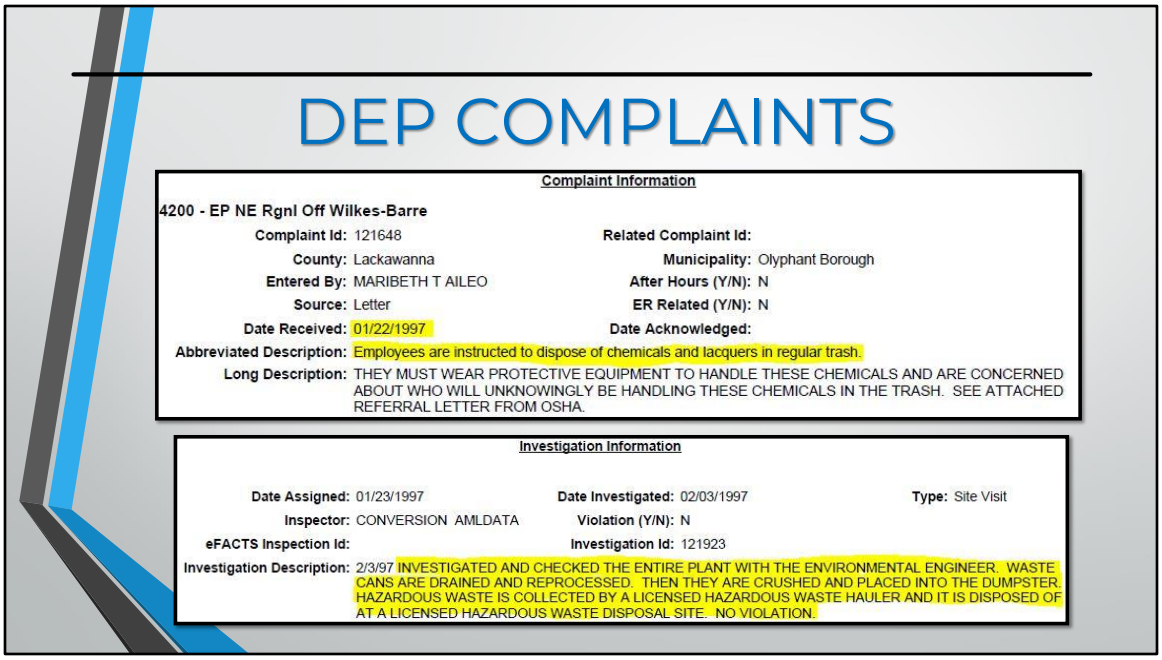
This report contradicts the Department of Health and Human Services and OSHA report from the previous slide. It says in 1993 there was an OSHA complaint for **“Benzene”**. The fine was $1,500.



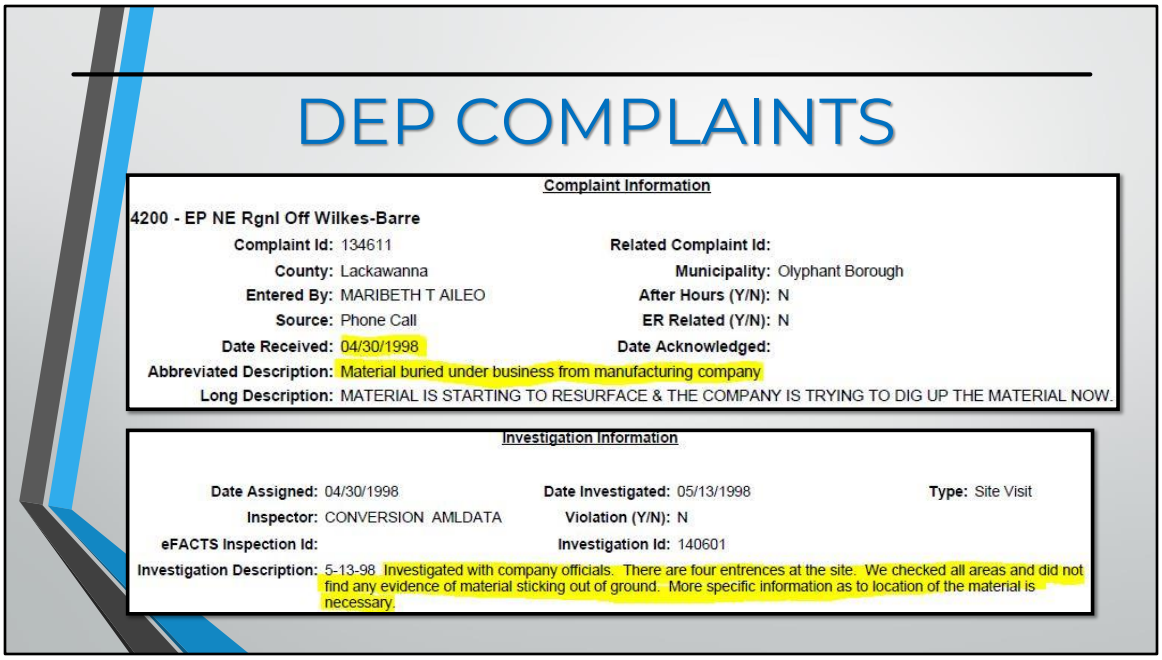
1993 – Complaint made that there are **buried barrels containing vinyl chloride**. DEP inspector spoke to who made the complaint, but she did not know the location. She thinks this happened 8 years ago. So, that would have been 1985. **No Violation filed.**



1995 – Complaint made that **chemicals dumped down drain that goes to the Lackawanna River**. DEP inspector was assured that wasn't happening by Mr. Butczynski. **No Violation filed.**



1997 – Complaint made that **employees are instructed to dispose of chemicals and lacquers in regular trash**. DEP inspector checked the entire plant with the environmental engineer and was assured that all hazardous waste is disposed of properly. **No Violation filed.**



1998 – Complaint made that **material is buried under the business and it is starting to resurface, and the company is trying to dig it up now**. DEP inspector went on-site (13 days later) and saw no evidence of buried material. **No Violation filed.**

FERN HILL WAREHOUSE

In **1999** the DEP excavated **48 buried drums** at the Fern Hill Warehouse location. **Five of which were leaking**.

THIS INFORMATION WAS NOT

MADE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC… UTIL NOW!

Even though the **DRUMS** contents contained significant levels of hazardous contaminants, indicating potential environmental and health risks, the surrounding **SOILS** showed low contaminant levels within regulatory safety thresholds… according to the DEP at the time.

However, if these drums were excavated today, I don't think they would have the same response since now the statewide health standards have become stricter.

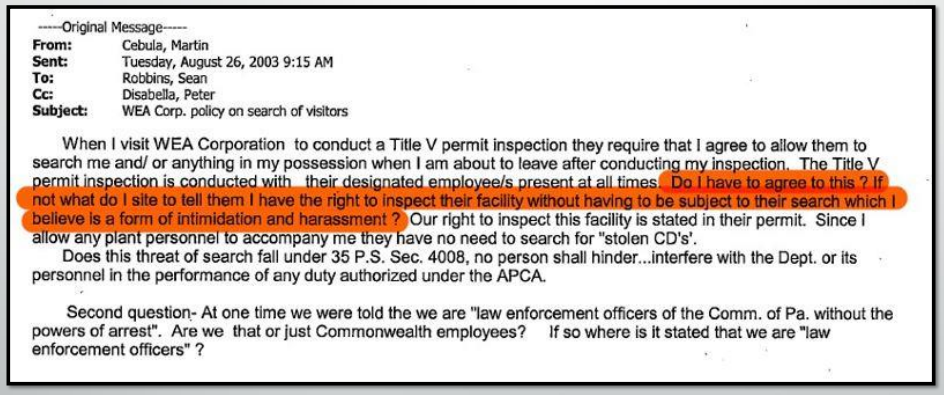
Found in the Drums:

1. Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) - Known to cause Kidney/Liver Cancer
2. Trichloroethylene (TCE) - Known to cause Kidney/Liver Cancer
3. Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) - Known to cause Liver/Reproductive Issues
4. 1,1-Dichloroethylene - Also known as Vinyl Chloride - Liver/Lung Cancer
5. Cadmium - Known to cause Lung/Prostate/Kidney Cancer
6. Nickel Compounds - Known to cause Lung/Prostate/Kidney Cancer
7. Lead Compounds - Known to cause Lung/Prostate/Kidney Cancer
8. Cobalt Compounds - Known to cause Lung/Prostate/Kidney Cancer

FERN HILL WAREHOUSE

Up the street from the now Canpack building on E Lackawanna. The X's mark where the barrels were excavated. Directly next to this site is the development Acorn Hill Estates.

DEP INSPECTOR HARASSMENT



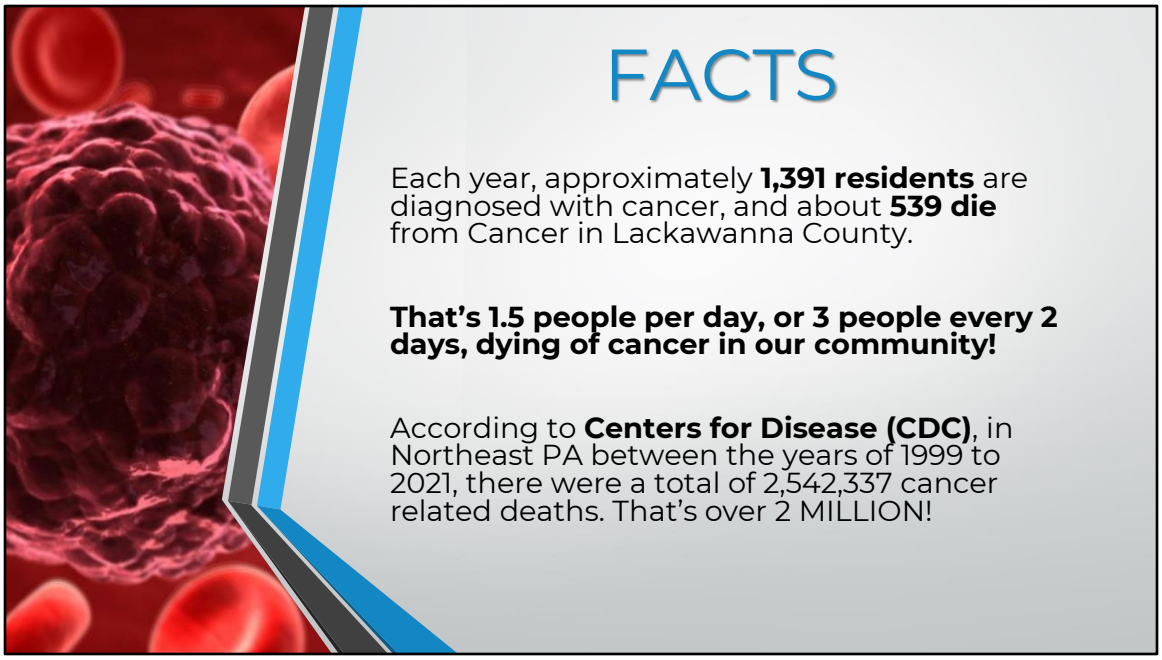
-----Original Message-----
From: Cebula, Martin
Sent: Tuesday, August 26, 2003 9:15 AM
To: Robbins, Sean
Cc: Disabella, Peter
Subject: WEA Corp. policy on search of visitors

When I visit WEA Corporation to conduct a Title V permit inspection they require that I agree to allow them to search me and/ or anything in my possession when I am about to leave after conducting my inspection. The Title V permit inspection is conducted with their designated employee/s present at all times. Do I have to agree to this ? If not what do I site to tell them I have the right to inspect their facility without having to be subject to their search which I believe is a form of intimidation and harassment ? Our right to inspect this facility is stated in their permit. Since I allow any plant personnel to accompany me they have no need to search for "stolen CD's'.

Does this threat of search fall under 35 P.S. Sec. 4008, no person shall hinder...interfere with the Dept. or its personnel in the performance of any duty authorized under the APCA.

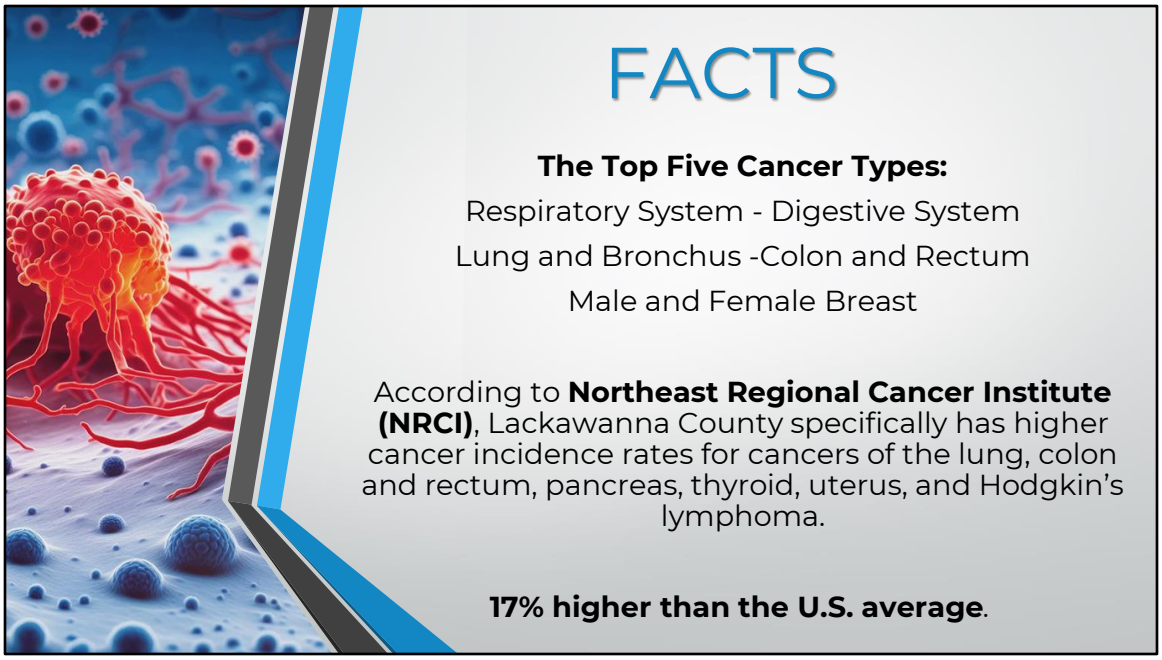
Second question- At one time we were told the we are "law enforcement officers of the Comm. of Pa. without the powers of arrest". Are we that or just Commonwealth employees? If so where is it stated that we are "law enforcement officers" ?

In Aug 2003, a DEP Inspector name **Martin Cebula** wrote an email to his superior saying, When he visits the WEA Corporation to conduct a Title V permit Inspection (Air Quality) **they require him to agree to a search of himself and anything in his possession even though he is accompanied by a WEA employee the entire time.** He also says that WEA has referred to him as **"law enforcement officers of the Commonwealth of PA without the powers to arrest".** – He then goes on to say, Do I have to agree to this? If not, what do I say to them? I have the right to inspect their facility without being subject to a search? **I believe this is a form of intimidation and harassment.** – His superior responded back and said, **"He does not have to agree to a search, and this is a form of harassment and intimidation, and we will not tolerate it."**



Each year, approximately **1,391 residents** are diagnosed with cancer, and about **539 die** from Cancer in Lackawanna County.

That's 1.5 people per day, or 3 people every 2 days, dying of cancer in our community!



The Top Five Cancer Types:
Respiratory System
Digestive System
Lung and Bronchus
Colon and Rectum
Male and Female Breast

17% higher than the U.S. average.

MY FATHER'S STORY

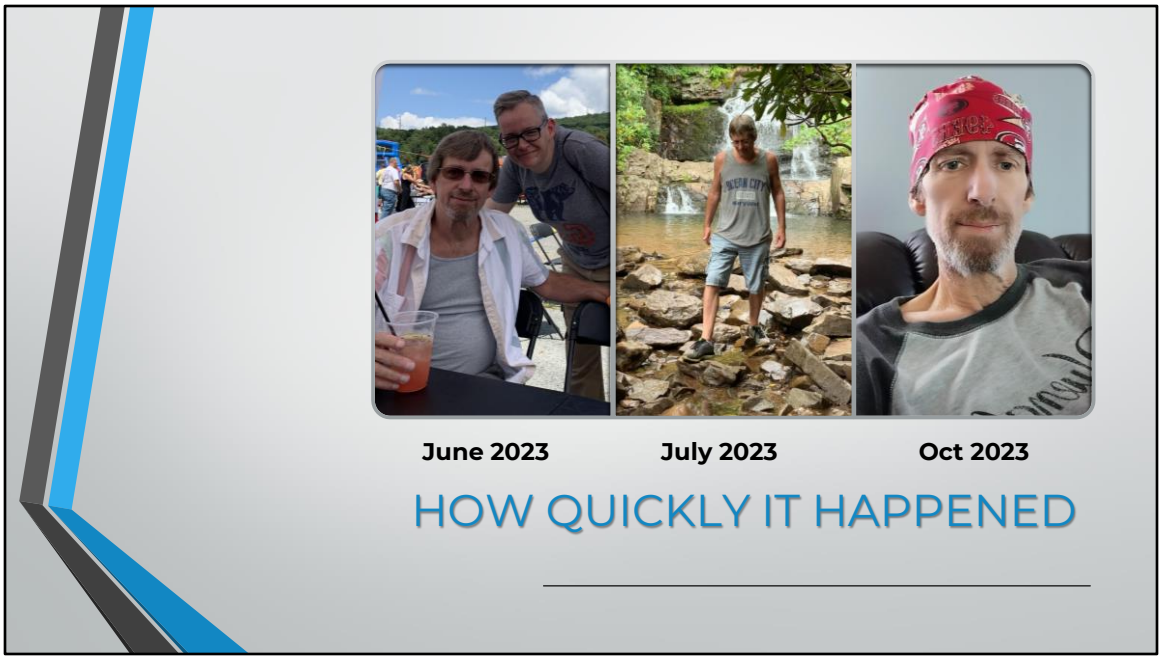
Zadin Age 4

Xander Age 3

My nephews Zadin (Age 11 months at the time) and Xander (age 3 at the time) were involved in a house fire. Xander did not make it out alive, but Zadin was rescued. He was burned over 40 percent of his body and spent weeks in a medically induced coma. My dad took custody of Zadin and very diligently oversaw each aspect of his recovery. My dad essentially became a father to Zadin. When Zadin was 15 years old, I took over custody of him because my dad started getting ill. My father passed in Nov 2023, just months before Zadin's 18th birthday. Zadin is now 19 years old and doing great!

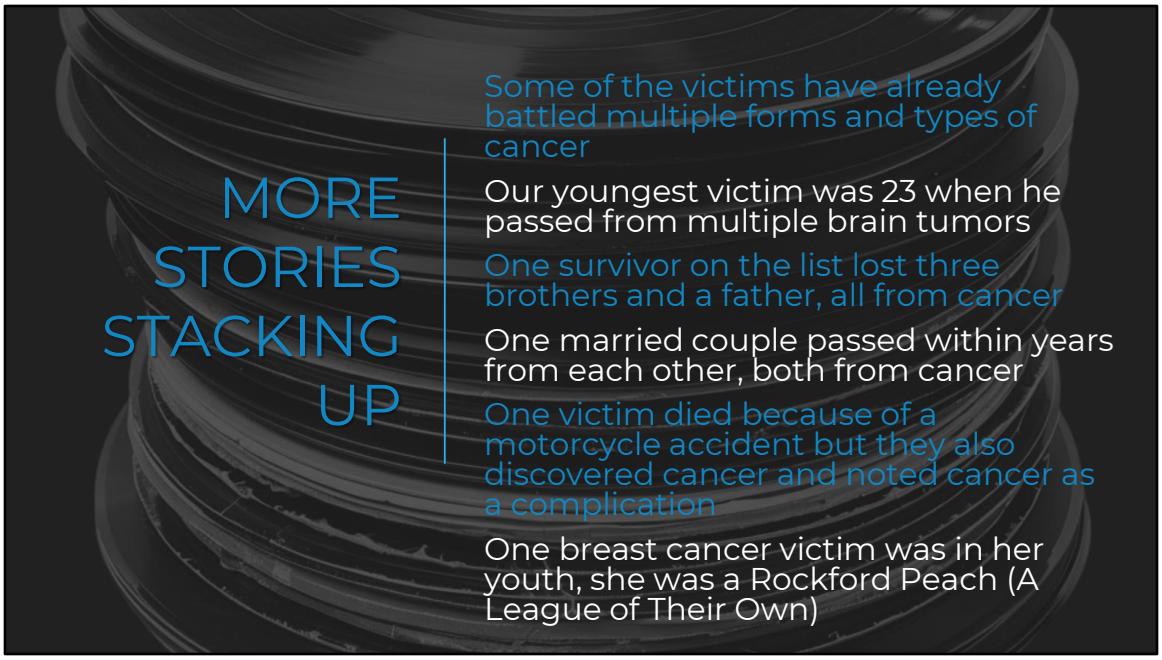
Eighteen months after that fire, my younger sister was shot by a "mass shooter" personality with an AK-47. She needed extensive in-home care as it took her eleven months to heal. My dad saw to all her debridement's and bandage changes personally and gave her the best conditions for surgical reconstruction that my sister could have hoped for.

My dad was our hero and our care giver, and my best friend and he did not even live to retirement age. We still had time, and we still had big plans for the future. I started this project because of him!



June 2023 – A festival
July 2023 – Hiking
Aug 2023 – When he told us he had cancer
Oct 2023 – Losing weight and hair rapidly
Nov 2023 – He passed away

How quickly it happened


MORE STORIES STACKING UP
Some of the victims have already battled multiple forms and types of cancer
Our youngest victim was 23 when he passed from multiple brain tumors
One survivor on the list lost three brothers and a father, all from cancer
One married couple passed within years from each other, both from cancer
One victim died because of a motorcycle accident but they also discovered cancer and noted cancer as a complication
One breast cancer victim was in her youth, she was a Rockford Peach (A League of Their Own)

WE NEED YOU

We are looking to feature a section on our website dedicated to personal stories that highlight your experiences and who you are as an individual.

If you have a story that illustrates how the negligence of a once well-respected facility has impacted your life, or someone you know, we invite you to share it with us.

Your voice matters, and we deeply appreciate anyone willing to contribute.

If you would like to share your story, please feel free to speak now or email us at your convenience.

We will also accept anonymous stories!

THANK YOU!

Lackawanna Citizens Overwatch Project
www.LackawannaCitizensOverwatchProject.com
LCOPActionNetwork@gmail.com
570-866-0900

A long, long time ago
I can still remember how that
Music used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make those people dance
And maybe they'd be happy for a while.

But February made me shiver
With each paper I'd deliver
Bad news on the doorstep
I couldn't take one more step

I can't remember if I cried
When I read about his widowed bride
But something touched me
Deep inside
The day the MUSIC died

-Don Mclean

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