

U.S. Department of Health and Human Designation
of Additional Members of the Special Exposure Cohort
under the
Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000

Designating a Class of Employees from
Sandia National Laboratories
Albuquerque, New Mexico



I. Designation

I, Alex M. Azar II, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), designate the class of employees defined in Section II of this report for addition to the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC), as authorized under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act of 2000 (EEOICPA), 42 U.S.C. § 7384q.

October 18, 2018
Date

[Signature on File]
Alex M. Azar II, Secretary

II. Employee Class Definition

All employees of the Department of Energy, its predecessor agencies, and its contractors or subcontractors who worked in any area at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, during the period from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996, for a number of work days aggregating at least 250 work days, occurring either solely under this employment or in combination with work days within the parameters established for one or more other classes of employees included in the Special Exposure Cohort.

III. Designation Criteria and Recommendations

Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7384q, for the class defined in Section II of this report, the Secretary has determined, and the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health (Board) has recommended, that

(1) it is not feasible to estimate with sufficient accuracy the radiation dose that the class received; and

(2) there is a reasonable likelihood that such radiation dose may have endangered the health of members of the class.

The SEC final rule states in 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(1) that it is feasible in two situations to estimate the radiation dose that the class received with sufficient accuracy. First, the rule states that radiation doses may be estimated with sufficient accuracy if NIOSH has established that it has access to sufficient information to estimate the maximum radiation dose for every type of cancer for which radiation doses are reconstructed that could have been incurred under plausible circumstances by any member of the class. Alternatively, radiation doses may be estimated with sufficient accuracy if NIOSH has established that it has access to sufficient information to estimate the radiation doses of members of the class more precisely than a maximum dose estimate.

NIOSH determined that there is insufficient information to estimate the radiation dose of individual members of the class with sufficient accuracy under the two abovementioned situations. The Board, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7384q, advised the Secretary to designate the class as an addition to the SEC in a letter received by the Secretary on September 24, 2018.

IV. Designation Findings

Infeasibility of Estimating Radiation Doses with Sufficient Accuracy

The Secretary established the infeasibility determination for the class of employees covered by this report based upon the findings summarized below.

- NIOSH determined that members of the evaluated class may have received internal radiation exposure to plutonium, tritium, uranium, americium, and fission and activation products.
- NIOSH found that exposures to the source terms varied for the period from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996, which created varying potential exposure scenarios. NIOSH also found the available air monitoring data were insufficient for dose reconstruction. The transitional and developmental nature of Sandia National Laboratories' internal monitoring program at the time also contributed to uncertainties associated with the monitoring data. Therefore, NIOSH lacks sufficient information, which includes personal and air monitoring data, to allow it to estimate the internal dose with sufficient accuracy for members of the proposed class.
- NIOSH determined that members of the evaluated class may have received external radiation exposure to beta, gamma, and neutron radiation.
- Based on NIOSH's assessment of the facility's external dosimetry program, the exposure data obtained through NIOSH's data capture effort, and interviews with the facility's personnel, NIOSH concluded that the facility's external monitoring data was of a sufficient pedigree to complete individual dose reconstructions for the period from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996. Therefore, NIOSH found that it is possible to reconstruct external radiation doses for the proposed class.
- Therefore, pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(1), NIOSH has concluded that there is insufficient information to either: (1) estimate the maximum radiation dose, for every type of cancer for which radiation doses are reconstructed, that could have been incurred under plausible circumstances by any member of the class; or (2) estimate the radiation doses more precisely than a maximum dose estimate for the any member of the class at Sandia National Laboratories for the time period from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996.
- Although NIOSH found that it is not possible to completely reconstruct internal radiation doses for the proposed class, NIOSH intends to use any internal monitoring data that may become available for an individual claim (and that can be interpreted using existing NIOSH dose reconstruction processes or procedures). Therefore, dose reconstructions for individuals employed at Sandia National Laboratories for the time period from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1996, but who do not qualify for inclusion in the SEC, may be completed using these data as appropriate.

- The Board concurred with the NIOSH evaluation and recommended the proposed class for addition to the SEC.

Health Endangerment

The Secretary established the health endangerment determination for the class of employees covered by this report based upon the findings summarized below.

(1) Pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(3), NIOSH established that there is a reasonable likelihood that such radiation doses may have endangered the health of members of the class. Pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(3)(ii), NIOSH specified a minimum duration of employment to satisfy this health endangerment criterion as “having been employed for a number of work days aggregating at least 250 work days within the parameters established for this class or in combination with work days within the parameters established for one or more other classes of employees in the Cohort.”

(2) NIOSH did not identify any evidence from the petitioners or from other resources that would establish that the class was exposed to radiation during a discrete incident likely to have involved exceptionally high-level exposures, such as a nuclear criticality incident, as defined under 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(3)(i).

(3) The Board concurred with NIOSH’s finding that the health of the class may have been endangered and defined the class according to the 250-work day requirement specified under 42 C.F.R. § 83.13(c)(3)(ii).

V. Effect and Effective Date of Designation

The Secretary submits this report on the designation of one additional class to the SEC for review by Congress, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 7384l(14)(C)(ii) and 7384q(c)(2)(A), as amended by the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Pub. L. No. 108-375 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 42 U.S.C.). Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7384l(14)(C)(ii), as amended by the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Pub. L. No. 108-375 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 42 U.S.C.), the designation in this report will become effective 30 days after the date of this report’s submission to Congress “unless Congress otherwise provides.”

VI. Administrative Review of Designation

The health endangerment determination of the designation provided in this report may be subject to an administrative review within HHS, pursuant to 42 C.F.R. § 83.18(a). On the basis of such a review, if the Secretary decides to expand the class of employees covered by this designation, the Secretary would transmit a supplementary report to Congress providing the expanded employee class definition and the criteria and findings on which the decision was based.