

# Women Sue DuPont Over Chemical Exposure Ailments

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP) — Two West Virginia women who won a class-action lawsuit against DuPont Co. over long-term exposure to toxins from a former zinc-smelting plant are suing again, this time seeking damages for dozens of ailments they say were caused by the chemicals.

Spelter residents Rebecca Morlock and Waunona Crouser filed their complaints this week in Harrison County Circuit Court, where they are demanding damages for pain and suffering, medical testing and treatment, lost wages, emotional distress and more. The amount of damages would be determined by a jury.

Both Morlock and Crouser declined to discuss their cases, except to say that others like them will soon be filed.

By Thursday morning, at least two people who were not plaintiffs in the original case had also filed complaints. Joshua Finch of Meadowbrook and Amanda Finch of Clarksburg blame DuPont for ailments ranging from rashes and recurring infections to bone tumors.

The four complaints are virtually identical except for the list of health problems, indicating the plaintiffs are collaborating. None is represented by an attorney, and it's unclear why they are filing the cases now.

Spokesman Dan Turner said DuPont has not yet seen the complaints and could not comment.

The lawsuits accuse the company of negligence and list dozens of maladies the plaintiffs say were caused by long-term exposure to arsenic, cadmium, lead and other toxins from the Spelter smelter, which operated in Harrison County for more than 90 years.

Among the complaints: ovarian and uterine cancer; bipolar disorder and mental distress; kidney problems; migraine headaches; seizure-like activity; skin lesions; low IQ scores; numbness and tingling of extremities; and thyroid, vascular and connective tissue diseases.

The smelter produced more than 4 billion pounds of slab zinc and 400 million pounds of zinc dust for use in rustproofing products, paint pigments and battery anodes. By 1971, a toxic waste pile stood 100 feet tall and covered nearly half of the 112-acre site. Dust often blew from the site into homes in nearby communities.

The plant closed in 2001, and DuPont worked with state regulators to demolish

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factory buildings and cap the site with plastic and clean soil.

But in 2007, a jury ruled DuPont was negligent in creating the waste pile, and that it had deliberately downplayed and lied to its neighbors about possible health threats. It awarded \$380 million in punitive damages, but the state Supreme Court later cut that to \$196 million.

The high court affirmed thousands of residents were entitled to a \$130 million, 40-year medical monitoring program and a \$55.5 million cleanup fund for private properties. Still, the case remains unresolved: A jury has yet to decide whether the underlying claims were filed in time to permit the remaining damages.

The new complaints also name other companies that operated or worked at the site over the years, but most have since dissolved, and in the class-action trial, DuPont was held responsible for all activity on the property.

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