



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



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## Jun-06-07 Time is Running out for New Jersey's 9/11 Responders to Register For Federally-Funded Workers' Compensation Benefits

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**Contact:****Marcela Ospina**

TEL: 609.292.0306

FAX: 609.777.3634

- News Release -

**Contact:****Kevin Smith**

TEL: 609.984.2841

FAX: 609.777.3634

### Time is Running out for New Jersey's 9/11 Responders to Register For Federally-Funded Workers' Compensation Benefits

**JERSEY CITY, June 6, 2007** – New Jersey Labor Commissioner David J. Socolow, New Jersey Health Commissioner Fred Jacobs, M.D., J.D., and other State officials urged New Jersey's 9/11 responders to register to maintain their eligibility for benefits before the deadline for federally funded workers' compensation benefits passes.

The time to register is running short for thousands of New Jerseyans along with other workers exposed to toxic elements while performing rescue, recovery or cleanup work following the attacks on the World Trade Center. To maintain eligibility for special federally-funded workers' compensation benefits, these workers need to register before **before August 14, 2007** with the New York State Workers' Compensation Board.

"So far, only a few of the responders who may be eligible have registered for these benefits. On behalf of Governor Corzine, we urge the thousands of New Jerseyans, including firefighters, construction workers and police officers who braved the dust and smoke from Ground Zero, to take this step to maintain their eligibility," Socolow said. "This federally-funded program could provide much-needed health care and income to workers whose health was jeopardized by their heroic response to the attacks on 9/11."

"Whether you were in the area as an employee or as volunteer, whether you are symptom-free or if you already had a claim denied for health complications attributed to conditions at Ground Zero, you can protect your family and your right to health care," said Commissioner Socolow. "It is important to register now – don't wait until the last minute. To register, you must mail a notarized form listing information about the time you spent working in rescue, recovery and clean-up in

the immediate aftermath of 9/11," Socolow said.

"The long-term health effects of the exposure of these workers are still unknown," Commissioner Fred Jacobs, M.D., J.D. of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services said. "Chronic respiratory conditions and other diseases such as asthma, blood cancer and sarcoidosis—a rare type of lung-scarring condition—can be debilitating for patients and devastating for families, and for that reason I urge all eligible first responders to sign up for these benefits before the deadline expires."

The Commissioners were joined by Richard Canas, Director of the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, State Senators Joseph Vitale (D-19th) and Loretta Weinberg (D-34th); as well as Assemblyperson Valerie Vainieri Huttle (D-34th), Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy and New Jersey State Police Lt. Colonel Drew Lieb, Deputy Superintendent of Homeland Security.

These special federally-funded workers' compensation benefits are designed to protect responders to the attacks on 9/11 no matter where they live. Workers who filed for 9/11-related workers' compensation benefits should complete the registration process before August 14 to protect their eligibility to file again in case other illnesses occur in the future.

If a worker qualifies for 9/11-related workers' compensation benefits, the program provides up to 100 percent of the cost of medical care for a work-related injury or illness. If the worker is unable to continue working because of the illness, workers' compensation can pay two-thirds of the workers' weekly wage up to a maximum of \$400 per week.

Registration is **not** the same as filing a claim for an illness or injury. By registering now, a worker is merely documenting the time he or she spent working in the rescue, recovery or cleanup efforts so that he or she will be eligible to file a claim in the future if necessary.

Those workers or volunteers who performed rescue, recovery or cleanup work during the 366-day period between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 12, 2002:

- anywhere in Manhattan south of Canal or Pike Streets, or
  - on the barge operation between Lower Manhattan and Staten Island or
  - at the Staten Island Fresh Kills Landfill or
  - at the New York City morgue
- should register **now**.

The federally-funded program is administered by the New York state workers' compensation system. Notarized registration forms must be sent to: NY State Workers' Compensation Board, Downstate Centralized Mailing, P.O. Box 5205, Binghamton, NY 13902.

Contact information and a downloadable registration form are available on the website of the new Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development at <http://www.nj.gov/labor/press/wcpressevent.htm>.

Or contact the New York State Workers' Compensation Board Customer Service Toll-Free Number (877) 632-4996.

Photos of Event.

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Department of Labor and Workforce Development: 1 John Fitch Plaza, P.O. Box 110 Trenton, NJ 08625-0110

Email: [Constituent.Relations@dol.state.nj.us](mailto:Constituent.Relations@dol.state.nj.us)

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