

Workplace accidents high in hydraulic fracking towns

Hydraulic fracturing or fracking has boomed in cities throughout the U.S., including in Pennsylvania. While there are still concerns over the environmental safety of hydraulic fracking, another issue has been added to the debate.

A new study found that towns with hydraulic fracking operations for oil and natural gas have lead to an increase in work injuries and fatalities. What types of injuries and accidents have been occurring on these worksites?

The study said that workers are more prone to suffer burns from hot water or have their limbs crushed by steel machinery. Along with those injuries, workers suffer serious illnesses and physical and emotional issues caused by their work. This includes illnesses caused by working outside in freezing weather, emotional isolation, poor nutrition, drug use, heavy drinking and high cases of sexually transmitted diseases. Female workers reported that they received threats of rape, sexual assault and domestic violence at some of the fracking worksites.

In addition to the health concerns stated above, there have been many reports about the adverse health effects associated with hydraulic fracking. This includes reports of unknown chemicals being used that contaminate local drinking water and the risks associated with diesel emissions being released from using heavy equipment.

Hydraulic fracking workers are usually hired as contract workers. They often receive high wages but do not receive any benefits, including health insurance. Since these workers are contract employees, they also may not receive workers' compensation coverage through the oil or gas company they are

working for. Many contract workers are covered by an agency that places contract workers at jobs, but the benefits they offer are minimal and may be more difficult to work with in the event of a workplace injury or illness.

The fracking industry is continuing to grow and more towns are being impacted by the potential job growth as well as the dangers and risks of working in these environments. Workers in this industry should make an effort to understand the risks they face and report any safety concerns they have.

Source: In These Times, "[Fracking 'Boom Towns' Rife with Workplace Accidents](#)," Kari Lydersen, Feb. 4, 2013

Our law firm represents workers who have suffered an injury or illness. To learn more about our law firm, please visit our [Pennsylvania Workplace Injury](#) page.