

WS-B-03 Morimitsu Watanabe (Abstract only)

Actions on Pneumoconiosis and Asbestos Measures taken by the Tokyo Federation of the National Federation of Construction Workers' Unions

Morimitsu Watanabe and Akira Horii

The Tokyo Federation of the National Federation of Construction Workers' Unions (Zenkensoren-Tokyo-Toren), Japan

Abstract

The Tokyo Federation of the National Federation of Construction Workers' Unions ("Zenkensoren-Tokyo-Toren") is a federation of craft unions for construction workers such as carpenters/plasterers and independent master carpenters in the construction/housing industries, and has about 143,000 members from 15 Tokyo-based unions at present.

As part of its actions to demand the recognition of pneumoconiosis and asbestos-related diseases as work-related, Zenkensoren-Tokyo-Toren tries to identify union members who are likely to suffer from occupational diseases through such actions as having X-rays taken during checkups reinterpreted by medical specialists and verification of receipts submitted to the National Health Insurance Association for Construction Workers, established by the Federation.

As well as demanding ex post facto compensation and relief measures by the recognition of pneumoconiosis and asbestos-related diseases as work-related, Tokyo-Toren considers it crucial to take direct actions to improve construction sites, which are the source of dust particles and asbestos. As hardly any measures are being taken against dust particles and asbestos on construction sites (including demolition/refurbishment sites) in Japan in practice, Zenkensoren-Toren presses major general contractors and housing manufacturers to take remedial measures, presenting them with real-world construction site situations.

Meanwhile, it launched "Union Members' Participatory Campaign for Construction Site Improvement", which is designed to help construction workers seek improvements of their work sites through provision of various tools such as the special "Site Improvement Kits", and has encouraged many workers to participate in it. As well as improving safety on site, Tokyo-Toren aims to better sanitary/environmental measures and ultimately enhance productivity by broadening this campaign.