

Study links vehicle exhaust, lung cancer mortality in trucking industry workers

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SACRAMENTO - Today the Air Resources Board announced new evidence that trucking industry workers who have had regular exposure to diesel and other types of vehicle exhaust showed an elevated risk of lung cancer with increasing years of work.

The new research reveals that trucking workers with an estimated 20 years on the job had an increased risk of lung cancer; long haul workers, dockworkers, pickup and delivery drivers, and people who worked as both dockworkers and pickup and delivery drivers had an increased risk compared to workers in other job categories, such as clerks and mechanics.

"We've known for more than a decade that exhaust from diesel trucks is dangerous," said ARB Chairman Mary Nichols. "The more we study these emissions the more dangerous it appears."

This latest data on the cause of death in trucking industry workers comes from a nationwide long term study, "Lung Cancer and Vehicle Exhaust in Trucking Industry Workers" by E. Garshick and colleagues, which assesses lung cancer deaths by job type in 31,135 Teamsters Union members from 1985 to 2000.

Nichols says the study "illustrates the greater burden on those who work with diesel engines daily."

Researchers limited their study to men older than 39 years with at least one year on the job, and examined men working as clerks, mechanics, long-haul drivers, dockworkers, combination workers, and in pickup and delivery. Within the study period there were 4,306 deaths seen in the study group with 779 cases of lung cancer. In addition, it implies that a reduction of diesel particulate matter will have health benefits for the trucking industry and the general public who live, commute, or work near diesel vehicles.

The study's results are consistent with previous studies in the United States and Canada that show an increased risk of lung cancer in occupations which are likely to be associated with exposure to diesel vehicle exhaust.

At the December meeting, board members will hear public comments and vote on the Statewide Truck and Bus Regulation. If the regulation is passed, diesel trucker owners will be required to install diesel exhaust filters on their rigs starting in 2010, with nearly all vehicles upgraded by 2014.

The expected health benefit of the truck regulation is 9,400 fewer premature deaths between 2010 and 2025, and greatly reduced health care cost. These benefits have a value of \$48 billion to \$69 billion.

Incentive funding to truck owners in the amount of \$1 billion in grants and loans will be made

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available through programs such as Carl Moyer, Proposition 1B, and private loans through AB 118 to comply with the proposed regulations.

For citations and more information on the study, please refer to the following link at www.arb.ca.gov/board/ma/2008/ma121108.htm and to review the evolution of the proposed diesel truck rule, please refer to www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/onrdiesel.htm

The Air Resources Board is a department of the California Environmental Protection Agency. ARB's mission is to promote and protect public health, welfare, and ecological resources through effective reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering effects on the economy. The ARB oversees all air pollution control efforts in California to attain and maintain health based air quality standards.