

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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HEADLINE: More tumor victims sue Amoco

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BODY:

Five more lawsuits have been filed against Amoco Corp. on behalf of employees who developed head tumors.

The most recent lawsuits were filed last Thursday, hours before the company officially ceased to exist in a merger with British Petroleum Co.

The lawsuits, like at least four others previously filed, charge the company with poor handling of toxic chemicals. They say a defective ventilation system helped spread the toxic vapors throughout the research center's Building 503.

"We can demonstrate that Amoco knew without a doubt that they were having air-circulation problems and that they were circulating known toxic chemicals in the building with air-handling problems," said Chicago attorney G. Grant Dixon, whose firm filed all five lawsuits.

At least 20 employees who have worked at that building have developed head tumors, seven of them a malignant form of cancer called glioma, company officials said. Four of those employees have died.

Three of the most recent lawsuits were filed on behalf of people who have died. All three died of cancer, but none was a glioma, Dixon said.

The other lawsuits were filed on behalf of two women, one with a benign tumor called schwannoma and another who has been diagnosed with a glioma, Dixon said.

Amoco spokesman Scott Dean on Monday said the company was unaware of a female employee diagnosed with glioma. Dean declined to comment on the lawsuits until company attorneys review them.

Dixon said his firm filed the lawsuits before Amoco's merger with London-based BP because some Amoco employees worried the cancer issue would be put on a back burner by British

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management.

Amoco has funded a two-year investigation of the cases by health experts from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Johns Hopkins University. The company said in October that investigators increasingly suspect chemicals used at the center are tied to the brain tumors and hope to solve the puzzle early this year.

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