



National Border Patrol Council

MEMBER ADVISORY

"Protecting Those Who Protect Our Borders"

UPDATE – Backscatter / VACIS

June 9, 2017

Members,

Yesterday, the Union advised employees of eight confirmed cases of cancer among agents who have been assigned to perform Backscatter/VACIS duties in the El Paso Sector. After seeing NBPC's advisory, a former Border Patrol employee also assigned to perform Backscatter duties advised us that he is afflicted with another type of cancer, Myxoid Liposarcoma. None of the aforementioned employees were genetically predisposed to their respective diagnoses. The eight confirmed cases we are aware of currently only consist of male employees, four of which reside in El Paso County and 4 of which reside in Dona Ana County. In 2014, [El Paso County, Texas](#) reported a thyroid cancer incidence rate for males at 7.6 persons diagnosed with the disease for every 100,000 people. In 2014, [Dona Ana County, New Mexico](#) reported a thyroid cancer incidence rate for males at 6.0 persons diagnosed with the disease for every 100,000 people.

NBPC urges Border Patrol agents who have been assigned to perform those duties to seek guidance from their personal physician. Employees should provide the physician with this advisory, a summary of his or her job duties, and any non-sensitive information on the VACIS/Backscatter, specifically the radioactive properties they bear. Employees should submit a completed CA-2 if cancer or any other medical condition is found and linked to their employment along with a copy of the medical report or diagnosis. For more information, refer to Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation, [Publication CA-810, Chapter 2-3](#). Union representatives can assist employees with their Workers' Compensation claims. If your physician requests further details regarding the equipment used, you can refer [to ZBV and AS and E](#) on this link.

We are reviewing data that has been provided by the agency and are requesting more information as additional employees step forward. Once we have received, reviewed, and analyzed all of the information requested, we will provide members with another update.

Agents should share any concerns about operating the Backscatter/VACIS with management, and if ordered to use the equipment, inform them of the concerns involving their health and well-being prior to being ordered to operate the Backscatter/VACIS. If you are still ordered to operate them, please contact a Union Representative immediately. OSHA states that under certain circumstances workers have the right to refuse dangerous work. For employees to be protected under this doctrine certain criteria must be met. For more information visit <https://www.osha.gov/right-to-refuse.html>