

Falling Asbestos Rates, Rising Case Counts: Chattanooga's Industrial Past Still Surfacing in New Diagnoses

CHATTANOOGA, TN, UNITED STATES, August 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Decades after exposure at local legacy manufacturing facilities, many seniors are reporting asbestos-related diseases, some of which can be latent for more than 50 years.



Chattanooga's long industrial history continues to affect many residents decades after their exposure to asbestos-containing products. As more individuals receive diagnoses of mesothelioma, lung cancer, and other asbestos-related diseases, [Summers, Ruffolo & Rodgers](#) is helping raise awareness of the lasting impact of historical asbestos exposure. Founded in 1969, the firm has represented asbestos clients in Chattanooga and throughout Tennessee and north Georgia since the 1970s and continues to draw on decades of asbestos litigation experience when investigating potential claims.

Through those decades of asbestos litigation, the firm has developed extensive historical knowledge of regional worksites, asbestos-containing products, prior testimony, and product identification evidence that helps attorneys investigate exposures occurring many years before a diagnosis.

Jimmy F. Rodgers, Jr., attorney at the firm, said:

"Older Chattanooga residents are now discovering that the hard work they put in during their careers is not paying off as hoped. Instead, many of them are winding up with asbestos-related diseases due to environmental contaminants present in their workplace decades ago. We're using this as an opportunity to address this urgent public health issue for seniors living in the area. Historical asbestos exposure remains a significant public health issue in 2026."

Chattanooga's historic manufacturing facilities have changed significantly over the years, and asbestos use has declined in industrial settings. However, the health effects of asbestos exposure are not immediate and take years to develop. This latency period is commonly anywhere between 15 to 50 years after exposure, and sometimes longer. This means individuals

exposed to asbestos do not receive a diagnosis until decades after their work around asbestos-containing products ended. Because these diseases take years to develop, individuals are only now learning that work performed decades ago may be connected to a recent diagnosis.

Seniors who worked at Chattanooga's legacy manufacturing plants (like DuPont and Combustion Engineering), or TVA sites like Sequoyah Nuclear Plant or Widows Creek Steam Plant through the early-to-mid 1980s and sometimes later are encouraged to make sure their health care providers are aware of their occupational exposure to asbestos. Mesothelioma is sometimes misdiagnosed as pneumonia, COPD, or pleural effusion, and telling a physician about an occupational exposure history materially changes the differential analysis. Early detection of asbestos-related diseases can improve outcomes and expand treatment options. Former workers experiencing persistent respiratory symptoms should seek prompt medical evaluation.

Added Rodgers:

"The men and women who built this region's industry weren't told what they were breathing. Forty years later, we're sitting across the living room table from them and their families. The single most useful thing an older worker can do right now is tell their doctor where they worked and what they worked around — that one sentence affects what a physician looks for."

Individuals diagnosed with mesothelioma, lung cancer, or another asbestos-related disease may contact Summers, Ruffolo & Rodgers to discuss their circumstances. The firm's attorneys work closely with victims and their families while drawing on decades of historical asbestos litigation experience to help investigate potential sources of asbestos exposure.

For more information about Summers, Ruffolo & Rodgers, asbestos, and asbestos-related diseases, use the contact details below:

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