

I was under the false understanding that workers compensation was there to help the employee. I had no idea I was going to be put on trial as if I were a criminal. I have been told by several worker comp attorney's that the workers comp commissioner sides mostly with the employer. According to OSHA and the EPA, it is the duty of employers to see that the workplace is fit for employees to work in, and this includes ensuring proper indoor air quality. If the air quality at the workplace has been compromised due to any mold contamination, then employees are entitled to recover damages for any illnesses suffered by them. The employer also has a legal responsibility to remove all signs of mold contamination from the workplace. I am sure if this was happening to you or a member of your family you would have a sense of how I am feeling. We aren't talking about a mom and pop tomato business. His business sells anywhere from 5 to 9 million dollars in tomatoes in 4-5 weeks. He definitely had the money to maintain the building I worked in. He seems more interested in his profits than the workers who have contributed to his success. A worker was run over and killed on the farm years ago and he fought that claim as he didn't want his rates to go up. That is sad when the sacrifice is loss of life.

I found a Dr that said even she blamed other illnesses before she realized her patient had mold exposure.

<http://www.survivingmold.com/community/mary-ackerley-the-brain-on-fire-the-role-of-toxic-mold-in-triggering-psychiatric-symptoms#.VMDiZXxljEg.email>. I haven't had a period in over 7 years so the fact that workers comp is blaming my illness on menopause is a real slap in my face especially given what we now know I was breathing for the last few years.

When I told him that the building was making me sick, he told me he was not building another office or buying a new office trailer (FYI; that would have been an inexpensive fix) He said I must not be happy in my job. He has hired another lady to work in the office as of the 1<sup>st</sup> February she has no clue what is lurking in the walls. I have filed a formal complaint with OSHA in hopes that they go out and inspect the building by taking air quality samples and look under the buildings. I don't want what has happened to me to happen to another person. The owner of the building can no longer say he didn't know. Now he is putting someone's health in real jeopardy.

I have been extremely fearful of what lies ahead for me. My friend had to write this letter for me, I have battled this sickness for months now, feeling trapped in my own body and no way to pay for continued treatments and studies to hopefully get to the point where I have the quality of health that I had before I had to endure this exposure. I was a healthy, fit person who has always taken excellent care of myself and to see how my health has deteriorated as left me feeling helpless.

I have always been a hard working member of society I pay my bills. The only blemish I have on my record is a judgment from a mattress company that I have a dispute with. I purchased a mattress from them; they had signs all over the building that said; if you are not satisfied in 120 days we will return it. Not true!! I have a mattress in my spare room that I can't use brand new they won't come get it and exchange it for a different one because it was the most expensive one had in the store and they would have had to refund me some money. My credit card company said if I had use my card and not the store finance company they would have disputed it and I would have won. So the judgment will just stay on my record. Because I will take a dirt nap before I pay them.

I sincerely hope that this letter serves to let you know the battle I have endured and respectfully ask that you inform me if there is anything that your office can do to assist me with my situation. If you need any additional information or would like to speak to me in person, please feel free to contact me at

Lieberman because the antibiotics weren't working and my Dr said I needed a specialist for possible mold exposure when I informed her about the water leaks.

Dianne called me a few weeks later to see how I was doing. She said she had been sick for 2 weeks after being in that building for just 10 minutes. Dianne said that our figures had been off somewhere by \$2000.00 and since I was no longer working at Island Tomato and she could not return to the building as it would make her sick, we would not be able to check our figures. She said because the figures had been off, it would give her a reason to write in her report about the conditions of the building. She said she was going to tell them they needed to inspect the property. She also said the company would probably delete it from her report if she did.

I received a denial letter from Liberty Mutual for a worker compensation claim that I had not filed with that company. I feel sure they knew what problems the building had. The only company I filed a claim with was Summit Insurance Agency also DBA Bridgefield Casualty Insurance Co., the new carrier that began on May 2, 2014. I received a denial letter from them as well and have had to get an attorney to fight this because my employer doesn't want his rate to go up. Here it is February 2015 and I haven't worked since August of last year. This whole time I should've been focusing on getting well and trying not having to stress about trying to prove the building has mold.

I have been under the care at the Center for Occupational & Environmental Medicine. Dr. Lieberman is a well known physician on the effects and treatment of mold exposure. Since going to him my tongue isn't as white, the bumps inside my nose are almost gone; my nose has started draining. I didn't even realize my nose was so stuffed up until I was able to breathe freely. Regular doctors don't really know anything about treating mold. They are quick to prescribe medicines that only feed the mold and make your condition worse. I have had to eliminate any foods that have mold in them like cheese, certain fruits and vegetables, because these foods only feed the mold that is already in your system. The levels of mold in body are quite high; Penicillium 24.6 my level normal is 0.0 - 1.9, Aspergillus 34.06 my level normal 0.0 - 1.9

Chaetomium 3.0 my level normal 0.0 - 1.9, Stachybotryus 2.0 my level normal 0.0 - 1.9.

As in Dianne's experience I too have had the same reaction when coming in contact with mold after two months of being out of the toxic building and on treatment for mold. I unknowingly walked into a building for only 1 minute that must have had a water leak and had the bad kind of mold growing in it; I swelled up and turned gray. My mold exposure has affected my nervous system, sinuses and other organs. This is how I know my home which is on a slab foundation did not and is not making me sick. This also is how I also know I am not allergic to the common outdoor everyday molds we come in contact with. I don't swell up and turn gray. My Dr. said I would be highly allergic to mold from now on.

The mold has caused me to have a multiple chemical sensitivity which can cause to have nausea, flu like systems and a vertigo spin from certain smells. I have a constant pain in left side of my head, tremors. My kidneys are working over time I can't go for more 3 hours without going to the bathroom and sometime I go 4-5 times in an hour as if I hadn't gone at all. I have ice pick pains, extreme fatigue/lethargy, and bumps on my arms, thighs, butt, back. I am experiencing poor memory & concentration, trouble finding and spelling even the simplest of words. I am not sure what other problems I have because I have no income, no job and no means of making money to pay for the test I need. I am slowly depleting any savings I had to live. I have applied for social security disability, I have since received my denial letter and now I have to fight this as well. When a person is sick just getting up in the morning is a chore without the added stress of fighting for assistance.

February 12, 2014

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor  
1205 Pendleton Street  
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Governor Haley

Why do we have agencies in place that are suppose to help people when they become sick if all they do is cause them more stress. Believe me I would rather have my health back. I didn't do anything wrong but go to work, my job made me sick. Why should a person have to fight workers comp. wasn't it created to help the worker? Big business has lined the pockets of the agencies that were put in place to help the workers. When a person becomes sick they need assistance now, not months or years from now, this is my story.

When I started working for Island Tomato Growers in 2009; I was a healthy 47 year old woman going through menopause and seasonal allergies. The last two years I worked for this company, I found myself getting more and more fatigued, unexplained muscle aches, joint pains, stuffy nose. My tongue had turned white; I developed small bumps inside my nose, stuff constantly coming out of my eyes. It became apparent that this was not normal and when I began experiencing memory loss, had trouble finding words and spelling them; I felt I was dealing with brain fog. At first, I blamed all these things on menopause, allergies and getting older. I had no idea what could be causing such a dramatic decline in my health.

It wasn't until I was made aware of what was growing in the walls of my office. I now know that I was slowly being poisoned by a toxic building. In August, the maintenance man who knew nothing about treating mold cut out part of the building that was leaking without treating or killing the mold. Mold spores bloomed all over the place. I was sitting at my desk and started swelling up and turning gray. Once the maintenance man exposed the back side of the building you could see all the black mold growing. He also discovered that the sink in the bathroom had never been hooked up or capped off from the sink to the septic system which meant I was breathing methane gas for 5 1/2 years. They did not treat the mold, just covered it up with T1-11. It was apparent there was no vapor barrier between the ground under my office. When all the field workers came in June, the septic tank started overflowing and drained right under my office. He has several trailers on the property and the septic tank can't handle all those people using it. The season starts the end of May and runs till middle of July. The rest of the year I was the only person in the office so I was the target of the mold spores. I took pictures of the moldy building because I knew nobody would believe how bad it was.

In August 2014, Dianne Dallas from Liberty Mutual came to Island Tomato Growers to perform the yearly payroll audit for the old workers compensation company. (The policy for Island runs from the beginning of May to the following May). As soon as Dianne walked in the building her nose started running and she couldn't breathe. Dianne said I was going to have to make her copies of the information she needed so she could get out of the building. Dianne explained to me she had almost died and been read her last rights from a mold exposure in the past and is now highly allergic to mold. Dianne told me I needed to get out of that building as it was toxic. I was already sick and just getting off a round of