

Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula and the Asbestos Lung Cancer Cases Still Being Filed Today

What Retired Shipyard Workers in Mississippi and Alabama Need to Know About Asbestos Compensation

A lung cancer diagnosis later in life often sends Mississippi and Alabama shipyard workers backward through decades of work history, trying to understand how a career spent building and repairing naval vessels could be connected to a disease appearing 30 or 40 years after the last shift ended. For workers who spent careers at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula or at shipyard facilities along Alabama's Gulf Coast, that connection is medically documented and legally recognized. An experienced asbestos [lung cancer lawyer](#) can help workers and their families understand how that work history translates into a viable compensation claim. The distance between the work and the diagnosis does not weaken the claim. It explains it.

[Shipyard construction and repair work](#) during the peak decades of American naval production required sustained, hands-on contact with asbestos-containing materials in some of the most enclosed and poorly ventilated workspaces in any industry. The workers who built destroyers, amphibious assault ships, and cargo vessels in Mississippi and Alabama did so in environments where asbestos was not incidental to the work. For many trades, it was the defining material of the job.

Ingalls Shipbuilding and Its Place in Gulf Coast Asbestos Litigation

Ingalls Shipbuilding has operated continuously in Pascagoula, Mississippi since 1938, making it one of the longest-running and most productive naval shipyards in the United States. Now part of Huntington Ingalls Industries, the facility spent the better part of the 20th century building and repairing naval vessels for the United States military. During the decades when asbestos use in American industry was at its peak, from the 1940s through the late 1970s, Ingalls was among the most asbestos-intensive worksites in the country.

Asbestos was built into virtually every system on every vessel constructed or repaired at the facility. It insulated steam lines running through engine compartments and machinery spaces. It was applied as fireproofing to structural steel throughout the ship's interior. It was present in pipe insulation, boiler room lining, bulkhead coatings, gasket material, deck tile, and the thermal barriers wrapping every major piece of equipment below decks. Workers who entered those spaces to install, repair, or remove any part of those systems were exposed to airborne asbestos fibers as a direct and routine consequence of doing their jobs correctly.

Alabama's Gulf Coast shipyards, including facilities in and around Mobile that produced wartime cargo vessels and naval support ships, operated under the same conditions. Workers there encountered identical materials, worked in the same enclosed environments, and carry the same exposure history as the workforce at Pascagoula. Many workers moved between facilities over the course of their careers, accumulating exposure across multiple sites.

Which Trades Carried the Highest Asbestos Exposure Risk at Gulf Coast Shipyards

Asbestos exposure in shipyard environments followed job duties rather than titles. The workers most heavily exposed were those whose tasks required direct physical contact with asbestos-containing materials or who worked in sustained proximity to trades that disturbed those materials constantly.

The occupational groups that appear most frequently in Mississippi and Alabama shipyard lung cancer claims include:

- **Pipefitters and Steamfitters:** Workers who installed, repaired, and replaced pipe insulation had the most direct and sustained contact with asbestos materials of any trade in the shipyard, handling fiber-containing products by hand throughout their careers.
- **Boilermakers:** Boiler rooms aboard naval vessels were among the most asbestos-saturated environments in any industrial workplace, and boilermakers who serviced those systems were exposed to extremely high concentrations of airborne asbestos fibers.
- **Insulators and Lagers:** Workers whose primary function was applying asbestos insulation to pipes, valves, fittings, and machinery carried the highest documented occupational asbestos exposure of any trade group ever studied in industrial medicine.
- **Shipfitters and Structural Workers:** Even workers whose primary tasks were structural rather than insulation-focused were exposed to fiber released continuously by nearby trades working in the same enclosed compartments.
- **Electricians:** Wiring, switchgear, and conduit insulation throughout older naval vessels contained asbestos, and electricians who worked below decks and in engine rooms breathed the same contaminated air as every other trade around them.
- **Machinists and Maintenance Workers:** Routine equipment maintenance required repeated disturbance of asbestos gaskets, packing materials, and insulation, generating fiber exposure with each repair cycle throughout careers spanning decades.

Identifying which [trade a worker held and how that role created asbestos contact](#) is one of the first things an asbestos lung cancer lawyer examines when evaluating a shipyard claim, because job duties determine which manufacturers are liable and which compensation sources apply.

Why Lung Cancer Diagnoses in Retired Shipyard Workers Follow a Predictable Timeline

[Asbestos-related lung cancer](#) develops through a long and silent biological process. Inhaled asbestos fibers lodge permanently in lung tissue, where the human body has no mechanism to remove them. Over years and decades, those embedded fibers produce chronic inflammation and cellular damage that can eventually become malignant. The latency period between initial exposure and clinical diagnosis typically runs between 20 and 50 years, which means a Pascagoula or Mobile shipyard worker who was heavily exposed during the 1960s and 1970s falls precisely in the diagnostic window today.

This timeline is not coincidental. It is the expected clinical course of asbestos-related disease, and courts and medical experts have recognized it as such for decades. The fact that a worker retired years ago and felt healthy for most of that time does not diminish the connection between their shipyard work and their current diagnosis. It confirms the biology.

[Smoking history does not eliminate a shipyard worker's claim](#). Medical research consistently has shown that asbestos exposure and tobacco smoke interact synergistically, producing a combined lung cancer risk far greater than either factor alone. Courts across Mississippi and Alabama evaluate whether asbestos was a substantial contributing factor to the disease, and workers with smoking histories regularly succeed in asbestos lung cancer claims when that contribution is properly documented by occupational medicine physicians.

The Corporate Knowledge That Drives Asbestos Litigation

The legal foundation of shipyard asbestos claims rests not simply on the fact of exposure but on what the manufacturers of asbestos-containing products knew and when they knew it. Internal documents produced through decades of asbestos litigation have established that major manufacturers, including Johns Manville, Owens Corning, Armstrong World Industries, and Combustion Engineering, possessed medical research as far back as the 1930s and 1940s linking asbestos exposure to lung disease and cancer. Those companies suppressed that research, resisted warning requirements, and continued supplying their products to shipyards across the country while workers sickened and died.

That documented concealment is why courts and juries have awarded billions of dollars to asbestos exposure victims and why many of those manufacturers eventually declared bankruptcy under the accumulated weight of their liability. Federal bankruptcy proceedings required each of those companies to establish compensation trusts funded specifically to pay future victims. Those trusts remain active today, with tens of billions of dollars available to workers whose diseases are still developing.

Asbestos Trust Funds and What They Mean for Pascagoula and Mobile Shipyard Workers

More than 60 asbestos manufacturer bankruptcy trusts are currently active. Workers who were exposed to products from multiple manufacturers throughout their shipyard careers are frequently eligible to file claims against multiple trusts simultaneously, because the liability is traced to each product and each manufacturer separately rather than allocated to a single source.

The [asbestos trust fund](#) (ATF) claims process was designed to resolve cases more efficiently than traditional civil litigation. Many claims are resolved without trial, and in a significant number of cases the entire process can be completed without the claimant traveling for depositions or court appearances. For workers managing a cancer diagnosis alongside treatment demands, that practical reality matters as much as the legal framework.

Common trust fund sources in Mississippi and Alabama shipyard cases include:

- **Johns Manville Asbestos Trust:** The largest and most well-funded trust, covering products that were present at nearly every major shipyard in the country during the peak exposure decades.
- **Owens Corning and Fibreboard Trusts:** Covering insulation products that were standard across Gulf Coast shipbuilding and repair operations.
- **Combustion Engineering Trust:** Covering boiler and pressure vessel components that were central to naval vessel propulsion systems.
- **Babcock and Wilcox Trust:** Covering marine boiler systems and related equipment used extensively in naval construction.
- **Pittsburgh Corning Trust:** Covering pipe insulation products that were widely distributed to shipyards throughout the mid-20th century.
- **Armstrong World Industries Trust:** Covering thermal insulation and floor tile products present throughout the interior of vessels built and repaired at Ingalls and Alabama facilities.

Determining which trusts apply to a specific worker's claim requires matching job history, facility records, and product identification to each trust's eligibility criteria, and that process is where an asbestos lung cancer lawyer's investigative work directly affects how much compensation a worker or family ultimately recovers.

How Exposure Is Reconstructed When Records Are Incomplete or Missing

Retired shipyard workers and their families often assume that the passage of time and the loss of employment records will make a claim impossible to build. That assumption significantly

underestimates what [experienced asbestos attorneys](#) can reconstruct through investigative and legal work that does not depend on the claimant's personal recollection of every product they encountered.

For Ingalls Shipbuilding specifically, there is a substantial body of prior litigation history documenting which asbestos-containing products were present at the Pascagoula facility during which time periods. That prior evidentiary record, built through decades of depositions, procurement document discovery, and expert testimony, means that new claimants are not starting from zero. The products present at the facility, the manufacturers who supplied them, and the work practices that created exposure are already established in the litigation record. Alabama facility claims are supported by the same type of documented prior litigation history covering the Mobile area shipyards.

[Attorneys reconstruct](#) individual exposure through employment records, union archives, coworker testimony, and trade-practice evidence that establishes what workers in a given role regularly encountered. The reconstruction turns on what the job required rather than on what the worker remembers about brand names.

Wrongful Death Claims for Families of Deceased Shipyard Workers

Many of the people evaluating these claims are not the former workers themselves. They are [surviving spouses, adult children, and other family members](#) of men who spent careers at Ingalls or at Alabama shipyards and died from lung cancer, often before anyone in the family connected the diagnosis to the work history. Wrongful death claims and survival actions allow those families to pursue compensation even years after the worker's death.

Mississippi and Alabama both recognize the discovery rule in asbestos cases, which generally starts the statute of limitations from the date of diagnosis rather than the date of exposure. For families whose loved ones died within the past several years, that framework may mean the filing window is still open even when the underlying exposure occurred four or five decades ago. The only reliable way to know is to speak directly with an attorney handling these cases before any deadline passes.

Contact The Ferrell Law Group About A Shipyard Lung Cancer Claim

[Ferrell Law Group](#) represents lung cancer victims and their families nationwide, with substantial experience handling claims tied to Gulf Coast shipyard work at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula and at Alabama facilities along Mobile Bay. Workers and families dealing with a lung cancer diagnosis connected to shipyard careers are encouraged to contact us for a free consultation. Our attorneys will review the work history, the diagnosis, and the applicable compensation options with no obligation to proceed.

Every case we accept is handled on a contingency fee basis, which means our clients owe nothing unless we recover compensation on their behalf. There are no upfront costs and no fees of any kind unless we win. Our attorneys have over 30 years of experience building complex asbestos exposure cases and have [recovered hundreds of millions of dollars for clients](#) across the country. We will travel to meet clients when the situation requires it. [Contact us](#) for a free consultation.