

360 post-9/11 workers have died, including 80 of cancer, says state

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More than 360 workers who dealt with the aftermath of the [World Trade Center](#) disaster have died, state health officials said Wednesday.

Officials have determined the cause of death of 154 of the responders and volunteers who toiled at Ground Zero, the blocks nearby and at the [Fresh Kills](#) landfill, where debris from the site was taken.

Of those, 80 died of cancer.

"It's the tip of the iceberg," said [David Worby](#), who is representing 10,000 workers - 600 with cancer - who say they got sick after working on rescue and recovery efforts.

"These statistics bear out how toxic that site was," Worby said.

Most of the deadly tumors were in the lungs and digestive system, according to the tally from the state's World Trade Center Responder Fatality Investigation Program.

Other deaths were traced to blood cancers and heart and circulatory diseases. Five ex-workers committed suicide, said Kitty Gelberg, who is tracking the deaths for the program.

Gelberg said she had not yet determined whether the number of cancer deaths was more or less than those typically occurring in men in their 20s to 50s who work as cops, firefighters or laborers - the majority of 9/11 workers.

"We are not saying all of these deaths are World Trade Center-related," Gelberg said. "Without the statistics, we are not making judgment."

She added that relatives of people who died of cancer may be likely to link their loved one's death to their 9/11 work and add them to the database, despite other possible factors.

But Gelberg said she is compiling the deaths from public sources, individuals and agencies and believes there is an overall undercount of workers who have died. The statistics cover Sept. 12, 2001, through yesterday.

The city Health Department said it was "actively examining whether deaths have been elevated as a result of 9/11."

Last year, the head of [Mount Sinai Medical Center](#)'s monitoring and treatment program, [Dr. Robin Herbert](#), predicted a "third wave" of 9/11-related deaths from cancer.

"We know people were exposed to carcinogens. There was benzene, dioxin, asbestos," said her colleague [Dr. Philip Landrigan](#). "There's reason to be concerned, so we're engaged in watchful waiting. So far, there's no excess."

[Cathy Murray](#), whose husband, [Fire Lt. John Murray](#), died of colon cancer April 30, "absolutely" connects his disease to his work at Ground Zero. He was diagnosed in June and was 52 when he died, she said. An [FDNY](#) spokesman couldn't immediately say where or when Murray performed 9/11-related duty, but a department letter confirms that he spent at least 40 hours at World Trade Center-designated work sites.

"He was perfectly healthy," said Cathy Murray, 53, of [Staten Island](#). "He never smoked a day in his life, and neither did I. It happened so quick and so aggressive.

"He was responding at first, but then he wasn't," she added. "And now he's gone."

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