



THINK YOU WERE EXPOSED TO OIL FUMES IN THE CABIN AIR? BLOOD TEST INFORMATION PACKET FOR ENGINE OIL EXPOSURE

Exposure to oil fumes supplied to the cabin and flight deck can cause serious, long-term health problems and can threaten flight safety. The problem is indisputable, but time and again, airlines claim that crewmembers exposed to oil fumes are either malingering or have an underlying medical condition independent of the aircraft. Airlines are not required to monitor contaminants in the air supply or share aircraft mechanical records, so they get away with denying the problem, denying workers' compensation expenses, and not cleaning the air supply. **Many affected flight attendants and pilots are unable to prove exposure to oil fumes and are forced to leave the industry with serious health problems and limited – if any - employment options.**

To address this problem, Prof. Clem Furlong and his research team at the University of Washington have been working to develop a **blood test that will allow crewmembers and passengers to prove exposure to engine oil.** They are now in the final stages of identifying two enzymes in the blood that get “decorated” with a breakdown product of some particularly toxic oil additives called TCPs. TCPs are added to all aviation engine oils used on the US commercial fleet, and proving exposure to TCPs makes sense because aviation engine oils are one of the few sources. Airlines can not claim that you were exposed to TCPs while gardening or working on your car, for example.

The “decorated” enzymes don't stay in your blood forever (even though your symptoms can last a long time), so **you need to get your blood tested within three months of exposure at the latest, but preferably within the first week.** These blood tests will not prove *how much* oil you were exposed to, but they will give you the proof you need to counter your airline's claim that you were not exposed. **You can supply this proof of exposure to your physician(s) to increase the likelihood that any workers' compensation claim you file for related ill-health will be approved.**

Prof. Furlong's team is continuing to collect blood samples from affected flight attendants and pilots. They will soon be ready to start analyzing the blood, although if you submit a blood sample now, you will not get your test result right away because the test is not quite ready. Still, it is important to get your blood drawn and stored in the freezer at Prof. Furlong's lab as soon as possible.

Everyone needs the following documents:

- (1) Instructions for getting your blood tested;
- (2) Consent form that you need to sign; and
- (3) Questionnaire about conditions on the aircraft.

If you live or plan to be in the Seattle area, you will also need:

- (1) Driving directions to Prof. Furlong's lab.

If you don't live or plan to be in the Seattle area, you will also need:

- (1) Letter to your doctor; and
- (2) Instructions for the clinic where you get your blood drawn.