



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2007 Wisconsin Act 46
[2007 Assembly Bill 75]

**Assistance to Veterans With
Exposure to Depleted Uranium**

2007 Wisconsin Act 46 provides assistance to National Guard members and veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium (DU) during military service and creates a DU study committee. Depleted uranium is used in making defensive tank armor and armor-piercing munitions. Concerns have been raised, and studies conducted, about the chemical toxicity of, and health risks associated with DU exposure.

Act 46 does the following:

1. Directs the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs (DMA) to assist members of the National Guard who may have been exposed to DU in obtaining the best practice health screening test from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to test for DU exposure using a bioassay procedure sufficiently sensitive to detect low levels of DU.
2. Directs the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) to do all of the following for veterans who may have been exposed to DU while on active duty:
 - a. Assist veterans in obtaining the test described in item 1, above.
 - b. With assistance from DMA, provide information to veterans upon discharge from active duty regarding health and safety issues concerning DU exposure, including the types and efficacy of tests to detect DU exposure, treatments available for veterans affected by exposure to DU, and federal and state benefits available for veterans exposed to DU.
 - c. Provide information to DVA staff, veterans organizations, health care providers, and county veterans service officers (CVSOs), and create information on the Internet, regarding the effects of DU exposure, detection programs available, federal treatment programs, and federal and state benefits available to veterans with DU exposure.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.

3. Creates a depleted uranium study committee to:
 - a. Study the health effects on National Guard members and veterans of exposure to DU and other hazardous materials; and
 - b. Evaluate the current information provided to National Guard members and veterans regarding exposure to DU and other hazardous materials and the tests, medical treatments, and federal and state benefits, available to those exposed to DU and other hazardous materials.

The committee membership includes one appointee of each of the four legislative leaders and the heads of DMA, DVA, and DHFS; a CVSO appointed by the CVSO association of Wisconsin; and two veterans and two physicians or scientists with knowledge or experience with exposure to hazardous materials, appointed by the committee, which also appoints its own chair.

DMA, DVA, and DHFS are directed to assist the committee in fulfilling its responsibilities. The committee is required to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature by January 15, 2009, with any recommended legislation, regarding the training, medical treatment, and benefits available to National Guard members and veterans exposed to DU and other hazardous materials.

Effective Date: February 23, 2008

Prepared by: Pam Shannon, Senior Staff Attorney

March 17, 2008

PS:ty