

# Haryana government notifies Silicosis rehabilitation policy

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GURUGRAM: The state notified the Haryana Silicosis Rehabilitation Policy for the treatment, compensation, rehabilitation and to undertake other welfare measures for the workers affected by the dreadful occupational lung disease known as "Silicosis".

On Tuesday, Haryana Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Nayab Singh Saini said that any worker confirmed as suffering from Silicosis by the Silicosis Diagnosis Board shall be covered under this policy, which is applicable only for the workers working in the factories and at the construction sites.

In Haryana, Silicosis is a notifiable disease under The Factories Act, 1948 and The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. Workers suffering from silicosis mainly belong to socially and economically challenged sections of our society. Saini said that Silicosis being a form of occupational lung disease and caused by inhalation of crystalline silica dust, it is marked by inflammation and scarring in the form of nodular lesions in the lobes of lungs and is categorized as a type of pneumoconiosis.

The symptoms of Silicosis are associated with T.B., the patient suffers from shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of appetite, chest pain, Whooping Cough, respiratory failure and eventually leads to death. It is an incurable lung disease, which may occur at the Silicosis prone workplaces like factories such as stone crushers, coal fired thermal power plants, construction sites and mines.

Under rehabilitation and other welfare aspects of the policy, when the case of silicosis is confirmed by the Silicosis Diagnosis Board, the worker would immediately be referred to the hospital for treatment. Workers registered under the Employee State Insurance (ESI) Act, 1948 shall be given treatment at the ESI hospitals. Those who are not registered under the ESI Act 1948 shall be provided free treatment, investigations and medicines by the Health Department in all the district hospitals and medical colleges in the state. In case some tests or medicines or equipments for the treatment of the Silicosis affected worker are not available with the Health Department, the same would be procured from the open market by them and the payment for the same shall be reimbursed by the Labour Department.

All the functions pertaining to implementation of welfare measures and execution of the policy shall be performed by the Haryana Labour Welfare Board. Any worker suffering from Silicosis and confirmed by Silicosis Diagnosis Board shall be issued an Identity Card by the Haryana Labour Welfare Board.

Also, workers registered under the Employee State Insurance Act, 1948 would be given compensation as per the provisions of the ESI Act, 1948 and the other workers who are not registered under the Act, would be given compensation as per the provisions of the Employee's Compensation Act, 1923. A financial assistance of Rs five lakh would be given provided the worker has his identity card. This would be one-time assistance payable to the affected worker after confirmation by Silicosis Diagnosis Board. In case of death of worker before receiving the rehabilitation assistance after confirmation of Silicosis, the rehabilitation assistance shall be payable to widow or widower if the worker was married or to one of the living parents if worker was unmarried. Death certificate would be required in case of death of the worker before receiving the said assistance.

A financial assistance of Rs. one lakh would be given in case of death of the worker. The amount would be payable to widow or widower or to his or her nominee in case the deceased was unmarried. There would also be an assistance of Rs 15,000 for performing the funerary rituals of the deceased worker.

The policy also has a provision to give Silicosis Rehabilitation Pension at a rate of Rs 4,000 per month to the worker categorized as category A, B, C as per ILO Classification till he or she remains alive. To be eligible for the benefit, one should have identity card and submit all medical records. There is also a provision of family pension of Rs 3,500 per month after the death of the worker due to Silicosis. It will be admissible to the widow or widower till he or she is alive. In case of unmarried worker, it will be admissible to his or her living parents.

The financial assistance ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 12,000 per annum would be given for education of the children of the workers from class I to Master's Degree. In case of class I to V, an assistance of Rs 5,000 would be given, but it would be Rs 6,000 from class VI to VIII and Rs 8,000 from class IX to X and Rs 10,000 from class XI to XII. For ITI diploma or graduation or post-graduation, the financial assistance would be Rs 12,000. To avail the benefit of financial assistance, apart from the identity card, the beneficiary should have documents like result of previous class, admission certificate of next class. It would be admissible to two boys and upto three girls irrespective of the order of their birth.

The policy also has a provision to give Rs 51,000 as Kanyadaan Assistance upto three daughters on the occasion of their marriage. Similarly, financial assistance of Rs 11,000 would be given on marriage of sons and it would be admissible upto two sons. To avail the benefit, one would have to produce marriage invitation card attested by Sarpanch or ward member.

A separate corpus would be created to finance these welfare schemes and to execute the Policy. It shall consist of 70 per cent contribution by the Haryana Labour Welfare Board and 30 per cent by the Haryana Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. The applications for various welfare schemes shall be dealt by the Haryana Labour Welfare Board and Labour Commissioner, Haryana being Welfare Commissioner shall be the competent authority to sanction the expenditure to be incurred for the welfare schemes and any other expenditure associated with the policy. To avail of the welfare assistance, the workers affected from Silicosis shall submit an application to the Assistant Director, Industrial Health of the concerned jurisdiction who shall forward it to the office of Labour Commissioner-cum-Welfare Commissioner, Haryana in the prescribed performa which can be downloaded from [thehrylabour.gov.in](http://thehrylabour.gov.in).

A co-ordinated and comprehensive awareness programme would be launched in coordination with the doctors of ESI Health care hospitals, District Civil hospitals, Medical Colleges and NGOs and social activists working in the State.

Despite all efforts being made worldwide to prevent and eradicate it, Silicosis still afflicts tens of millions of workers in hazardous occupations and kills thousands of people every year, around the world. With its potential to cause progressive and

permanent physical disability of the sufferer, silicosis continues to be one of the major occupational health illnesses in the world.