

# NZ Safety Alert

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe.

18 June 2021

## Neurodegenerative diseases

A recent report issued by the Occupational and Environmental Health Division, University of Toronto, Canada has found elevated incidence of motor neuron disease among workers in metal mines; Alzheimer's disease among workers within miscellaneous metals mines and gold mines, and Parkinson's disease among workers within gold mines and rock and soil drilling occupations.

Exposures such as nickel, aluminum and diesel engine exhaust may have contributed to these results.

Although it's early research, it does highlight the dangers of "challenging invisible enemies" that our workers may be exposed to.



### You need to ensure that:

1. You identify and assess all risks to worker health at your sites.
2. You select and implement controls that mitigate or reduce the risks to worker health.
3. You develop a Worker Health Control Plan for worker health in consultation with workers.

A worker is more likely to die of a work-related disease than a safety incident, such as a fall. Every year around 750 to 900 people die from work-related disease in New Zealand. About 80% of these are men.

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz>

**Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.**