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Widow of Refinery Worker Sues IMC Over Fatal Lung Cancer, Alleging Asbestos Exposure, Unsafe Conditions, and Negligence

David worked at the south shore refinery from the late 1980s through the Hovensa transition. His complaint argues that substandard respiratory equipment and unsafe practices exposed him to toxic dusts at levels beyond government and scientific standards.

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Janeke Simon **August 26, 2025**

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Aerial, nighttime shot of the south shore refinery on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

Surviving relatives of deceased refinery workers continue to appeal to the courts for damages from the companies involved in the facility's management and operations.

A new civil complaint filed last week by the widow of Jeanne Leroy David claims that his diagnosis of metastatic lung cancer related to asbestos, and his subsequent death, was the fault of the Virgin Islands Industrial Maintenance Corporation, named as defendant.

Mr. David worked at the refinery on St. Croix's south shore from the late 1980's, when it was owned by HOVIC, through the transition to Hovensa. Over the course of his employment, Mr. David "worked for various contractors," the lawsuit claims. His alleged "exposure to toxic dusts primarily occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s."

According to the complaint, the dust contained asbestos, silica, and "catalyst." Respiratory protection used by Mr. David was "substandard," and "wholly inadequate to guard against the inhalation of toxic substances," the lawsuit argues. As a result, Mr. David "came into contact with and inhaled asbestos-, silica-, and/or catalyst-laden dusts well in excess of the government limits as well as the scientific consensus standards." Conditions at the refinery, the lawsuit alleges, violated contemporary occupational health and safety regulations.

IMC and other contractors, the lawsuit alleges, failed in their duty to protect their workers from the deleterious health effects of toxic exposure. In particular, the company "failed to adopt timely and adequate occupational safety and health policies and procedures regarding the appropriate use, handling, and manipulation of these toxic substances," the complaint states.

The exposure led to scarring on Mr. David's lungs, lung cancer, and eventually his death on June 13 of this year following "many years" of "painful and debilitating treatments."

As a result, Mr. David's widow and daughter are now suing IMC for negligence and wrongful death. His estate is seeking punitive and other damages, as well as pre-trial interest should they prevail in court.

In recent months, similar wrongful death lawsuits have been filed [against IMC](#) and [against Hess](#) on behalf of former refinery workers who died from mesothelioma, lung cancer and other ailments.

According to records held by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in the Division of Corporations and Trademarks, IMC was [administratively dissolved](#) in 2022.