

NEW YORK POST

CIVILIANS A NEW WRINKLE IN GROUND ZERO CLAIMS

By MAGGIE HABERMAN

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May 28, 2007 – Seven city workers who weren't first responders on 9/11 have been out with injuries and receiving workers'-compensation benefits since the day of the attacks, officials told The Post.

According to the city Law Department, the seven people have made claims for a range of injuries, and are civilian workers with the NYPD, FDNY and Office of Management and Budget.

Officials wouldn't provide details about their injuries or their titles.

Overall, officials said, there are 35 cases of workers who aren't cops or firefighters who are currently getting workers' compensation for 9/11 claims.

Another four such people have died, and their families are getting their death benefits.

The number emerged last week, just as the city medical examiner reclassified the death of a federal Department of Education worker as related to Ground Zero dust. Felicia Dunn-Jones was caught in the toxic plume as the Twin Towers collapsed.

Several lawyers representing people, many of them rescue workers, who say they suffered bad health effects from breathing the soupy mix of poisons have indicated they will use the ruling in the Dunn-Jones case to bolster their own cases.

A Law Department spokeswoman said that since the law was changed last August, it had received only about another 90 claims.

Of those, she said, almost none have been approved.

But Robert Grey, who represented former Deputy Mayor Rudy Washington in his own claim, insisted the city is dramatically underestimating how many claims it has received - and said so few have been approved because the city is fighting the rest.

"If the city is proud of how it's treated 'emergency' personnel who responded to 9/11, it should remember that the so-called non-emergency personnel

[civilian workers] showed up at the same time, did a lot of the same work, and had the exact same toxic exposures," he said.

"Why is it that when it comes to having their medical bills paid and their lost wages reimbursed, they become second-class citizens?"