

Bus workers claim fumes caused illnesses

By Matthew Sweeney
msweeney@am-ny.com

For 32 years, Connor Hartnett worked in bus depots throughout the city with little or no ventilation.

Diesel fumes from hundreds of idling buses were so thick he often couldn't see the buses, said Hartnett, 73, who retired in 1992 and now has inoperable lung cancer and a heart condition.

Yesterday, Hartnett and 17 others filed suit

against diesel engine manufacturers, claiming that exposure to the particulate matter in the emissions caused their severe illnesses.

Hartnett's attorneys estimate that he was exposed for 42,960 hours during his time as a bus driver and shifter.

Other workers in the case had more exposure, like mechanics Vincenzo Mancio and Joseph Ganz, who are now deceased from cancer and heart problems and are repre-

sented by family in the lawsuit.

The suit filed yesterday in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx names 13 companies that manufacture diesel engines used by NYC Transit, including General Motors, Detroit Diesel Corporation, and Northrop Grumman Corp.

"They are going to have to do something to rectify what they have done to these gentle-

men," said John Dearie, co-counsel for the bus workers.

Several companies reached yesterday declined to comment, saying either that they would not speak on litigation or had not yet seen the suit.

Lawyers for the workers said that a Washington, D.C. appeals court ruling made a causal link between exposure to diesel fumes and illness.

am
NY
COM

Read
more of
this story
online