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Jury Awards \$22.7 Million in Asbestos Case, Allocates 70 Percent Liability to John Crane

LOS ANGELES -- A California jury has returned a \$22.7 million verdict in an asbestos case involving exposure to insulation in boilers, allocating 70 percent liability to John Crane, sources told HarrisMartin. Pfeifer, et al. v. Buffalo Pumps Inc., et al., No. BC416536 (Calif. Super. Ct., Los Angeles Cty.).

The California Superior Court for Los Angeles County jury returned the verdict on Nov. 18 after less than eight hours of deliberations, sources said. Judge Amy D. Hogue presided over the trial.

The lawsuit was filed by William and Anne Pfeifer, who claimed that William's exposure to asbestos while working as a boiler operator in the U.S. Navy exposed him to asbestos. The plaintiffs specifically alleged that exposure to asbestos-containing gaskets and packing manufactured by John Crane was responsible for his development of mesothelioma.

Jurors found that John Crane's products were a substantial factor in the development of Pfeifer's mesothelioma, that the products were defectively designed and marketed and that John Crane had failed to warn Pfeifer of dangers associated with asbestos-containing products, sources said.

The award was broken down into \$8.2 million in compensatory damages and \$14.5 million in punitive damages.

Testifying on behalf of the plaintiffs were Dr. Carl Andrew Brodtkin, occupational and preventive medicine; Dr. Robert Cameron, treating physician; Dr. Jim Millette, environmental scientist; and Dr. David Fractor, economist.

Testifying on behalf of John Crane were Dr. Allan Feingold, medicine; and Comm. James Delaney, U.S. Naval expert.

Counsel for the plaintiffs were Jay E. Stuemke and Rob Green of Simon, Eddins & Greenstone in Dallas.

John Crane was represented by Edward E. Hartley and Robert Nelder of Hassard Bonnington in San Francisco.

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