



# ▶ What You Should Know About Your Legal Rights Concerning Exposure to Welding Rod Fumes

INCLUDING JOB-RELATED PARKINSON'S DISEASE  
AND OTHER MANGANESE-RELATED ILLNESSES

ATTORNEYS & COUNSELORS AT LAW  
**Kelley & Ferraro** LLP

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## Kelley & Ferraro

Since its founding in 1997, the Cleveland-based firm has represented men, women, and families victimized by job-related diseases including Parkinson's Disease and other illnesses caused by exposure to manganese in welding rods in cases throughout the country <sup>(1)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> Kelley & Ferraro, an Ohio law firm, has represented clients in different states' courts throughout the country by serving as co-counsel with local counsel or appearing *pro hac vice* in those states' courts.

# Serves You and Your Family

The majority of the firm's more than 35,000 pending cases are on behalf of workers exposed on-the-job to manganese, silica, asbestos, and other toxic substances.

At Kelley & Ferraro, we also work to help our clients in other areas of the law. Besides manganese, silica, and asbestos-related diseases, Kelley & Ferraro practices in the areas of workers' compensation, toxic torts, product liability, medical malpractice, wrongful death, automobile accidents, and other types of personal injury cases.

Feel free to call Kelley & Ferraro at 216.575.0777 or toll-free at 1.888.839.8479 with any questions you may have if you would like to schedule an appointment and talk in person.

**Note:** *This brochure is intended to provide generalized answers to some questions about diseases caused by exposure to welding rod fumes based on a compilation of information obtained from sources available to the public, and how Kelley & Ferraro works to obtain just compensation for its clients' injuries. This is not meant to be individualized or personalized medical or legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Each client's case has its own unique facts and circumstances; therefore, no settlement or verdict references, or other information in this informational brochure should be used as a basis to diagnose any medical condition, evaluate the likelihood of success of any future case, or to assess the value of any other person's claim(s).*

## ► The Pain and Disease Caused From Exposure to Manganese In Welding Rod Fumes

Across America, working men and women, as well as their families, have been the victims of manganese-related diseases, particularly Parkinson's Disease, caused by exposure to welding rod fumes. And the numbers are growing.



Welders, sheet metal workers, steelworkers, chemical workers, construction workers, auto workers, railroad workers, plumbers, and pipefitters are all among the wage earners who breathed in the manganese fumes in welding rods.

Current research warns there may be a heightened danger of contracting Parkinson's Disease — at an age younger than generally associated with that disease — due to exposure to these fumes from the welding process.

One medical school study concluded that 15 professional welders developed typical clinical and neurological signs of Parkinson's Disease an average of 15 years earlier than the general population.

Manganese is toxic. It passes into the blood stream and spreads rapidly to the tissues. It affects the part of the brain and central nervous system that helps to control body movement — hence the loss of physical control associated with Parkinson's Disease.

## ► *Frequently Asked Questions About Welding Rod Exposure*

### **What is Parkinson's Disease?**

Parkinson's Disease is a neurological disorder that most often affects people over 50, due primarily to the deterioration of brain cells that control body movement. It restricts the ability of the nerves to send positive messages to the muscles. Consequently, the muscles lose the ability to function correctly.



## **What Are the Health Problems Related to Exposure to Welding Rod Fumes?**

Besides Parkinson's Disease and manganese poisoning, other health problems related to exposure to welding rod fumes may include symptoms similar to Parkinson's Disease, including:

- Trembling of the hands, fingers, arms, legs, and feet.
- Tremors.
- Loss of muscle control.
- Memory loss.
- Stuttering and confusion.
- Difficulty in maintaining balance.
- Shuffling gait caused by stiff limbs.

### **Other Less Obvious Indicators May Include:**

- Loss of intellectual capacity (in late stages).
- Difficulty in swallowing.
- Constipation.
- Slow response to questions.
- Excessive sweating.
- Incontinence.
- Whispery voice.
- Cramped handwriting.
- Anxiety.
- Dry skin.
- Drooling.
- Coughing.

## **What is Manganese?**

It is a metal often found in the environment. It is combined with oxygen, chlorine, carbon, or sulfur. In small doses, it is a dietary element essential for good health, particularly in the development of children.

## **Where is Manganese Found?**

- In the air, including fumes from steel, iron, and dust from welding and mining operations.
- Water, through lakes, rivers, and leaks from water treatment plants.
- Rock and soil deposits.





## **What is the Difference Between Exposure to Small Amounts of Manganese and High Levels of Manganese?**

Small amounts of manganese are essential for good health. Exposure to high levels of manganese, such as in welding fumes, can increase the risk of health problems, including Parkinson's Disease.

## **How are These Fumes Produced?**

They are given off during the welding of iron, steel, or aluminum. Generally, these fumes are metallic oxides generated by the heating of the metal being welded, the welding rod, or the coating of welding rods.



## **Who is at the Highest Risk for Health Problems, Including Parkinson's Disease, Caused by Exposure to Welding Fumes?**

- Welders.
- Power plant workers.
- Steelworkers.
- Miners.
- Workers who handle large amounts of pesticides.
- People who live near factories or plants that work with manganese, or those living in a high-traffic area where cars burn gasoline that contains manganese as an additive.

## **Can Parkinson's Disease be Prevented?**

Presently, Parkinson's Disease cannot be prevented, though research is looking into drug therapy as a possible prevention method.



## **Can Parkinson's Disease be Controlled or Treated?**

Yes. The most common treatment of Parkinson's Disease is medication. Surgery can sometimes destroy tissues responsible for tremors. It is important to maintain a healthy and stress-free lifestyle. Speech therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy may also be beneficial.

## **Can a Person be Screened for High Levels of Manganese That Might Cause Parkinson's and Other Diseases?**

Yes. Tests can determine whether a person has been exposed to manganese. These include measurements from the blood, urine, stool, and scalp hair. Still, these tests cannot determine conclusively how such levels will affect your health.

## **What if a Person Believes His or Her Parkinson's Disease — or Parkinson's-like Symptoms — May be Job Related?**

If you have any of the symptoms as described and you had workplace exposure to welding rods, you may want a medical evaluation to determine if your problems are attributable to welding rod-related lung diseases or manganese poisoning. If you do not have a doctor or do not know of one who performs this type of evaluation, we may be able to provide you with helpful information. Please call our office at 216.575.0777 or toll free-at 1.888.839.8479.

## **How Can I Learn About My Legal Rights if I Have Already Been Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease or Manganese Poisoning?**

If you have worked as a welder, plumber, pipefitter, sheet metal worker, or metal worker for two cumulative years prior to 1997 and have been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, manganese poisoning or suffer from tremors, trembling of the hands and fingers, memory loss, shaking, stuttering, and confusion, call us at Kelley & Ferraro for information about your legal rights. ■



## James L. Ferraro

James L. Ferraro, co-founder of Kelley & Ferraro, was chosen as one of 10 national finalists for *Trial Lawyer of the Year* in 1997 for his successful case against DuPont & Company. The case involved a product that caused a birth defect.

The Florida jury held DuPont accountable and awarded the family \$4 million. The Florida Supreme Court upheld the verdict. Since then, Ferraro has filed 12 suits on behalf of families whose children were born with similar defects — without their eyes — due to the wrongful conduct of DuPont.

Beyond the DuPont case, Ferraro has tried to verdict many cases to jury.

He is licensed to practice in Florida, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio.