

PlainfieldPatch

NEWS

Suit Filed in Death of Plainfield Man who Contracted Legionnaires'

The lawsuit alleges Robert Pierce died after being splashed with stagnant water while working for the CTA.

By **Karen Sorensen** December 28, 2010

The widow of a Plainfield man who died of Legionnaires' disease after being blasted with stagnant water while working for the Chicago Transit Authority has filed suit, according to a [published report](http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=6959996) (<http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=6959996>).

Heather Pierce alleges her husband, Robert, 37, died in August 2009 because Windmill Environmental Services and its manager, Jerome W. Dykstra, allowed CTA washing tanks to become contaminated with the bacteria that causes the disease, according to a CBS-TV Web site report on the suit.



Pierce, a CTA electrician, was using a train car washing machine on July 17, 2009, when he was blasted in the nose, mouth and face with warm, stagnant water. The next day, Pierce developed a very high fever and he was placed in an induced coma, the report said. He died on Aug. 5, 2009, from complications from Leg

ionnaires' disease has symptoms that are similar to pneumonia, including a high fever, chills and a cough, Web site, <http://www.cdc.gov> (http://www.cdc.gov/legionella/patient_facts.htm). Between 8,000 and 18,000 30 percent of those cases, the CDC says. Older people with chronic lung problems are more susceptible, the sit

According to the suit, the CTA uses high-power washers to clean its buses and trains and it's alleged that Windmill and eliminate conditions in which the bacteria could grow.

The suit seeks more than \$100,000 in damages plus legal costs, the report said. A spokesman from Windmill comment.

The DuPage County coroner called Pierce's death natural and did not cite the CTA machinery as the source of (<http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=6959996>). Although CTA officials said they did no cleaning tanks, they had them industrially cleaned after his death and received Chicago Department of Public

Robert and Heather Pierce moved to Plainfield in 2000, the report said.