

SOURCE: Stueve Siegel Hanson Woody LLP

Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Workers Sue Sanofi – Aventis Over Labor Law Violations

KANSAS CITY, MO, May 31 – In the wake of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, workers at a Sanofi – Aventis U.S. LLC facility alleged in Missouri federal court on Wednesday, May 31 that the world’s third largest pharmaceutical company violated federal and state labor laws.

Attorneys from Stueve Siegel Hanson Woody LLP, of Kansas City represent the workers and will seek certification of the case as a class action that includes overtime-eligible Sanofi – Aventis workers who have worked at the Kansas City manufacturing facility during the past five years. The case is Qualls, et. al v. Sanofi - Aventis U.S. LLC (No. 06-0435-CV-W-REL) filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Missouri. The class representatives are Gary Qualls of Kansas City, Missouri and Eddy Reber of Kansas City, Kansas.

The lawsuit filing comes after the Supreme Court’s Nov. 8, 2005 unanimous decision in IBP Inc. v. Alvarez that meat plant workers had to be paid for time required to put on and remove protective clothing and safety gear and for time required to walk to and from work stations. Attorney George A. Hanson, of Stueve Siegel Hanson Woody’s Kansas City, MO, office stated, “The same compensation practices the Supreme Court found illegal in the Alvarez cases are at issue here. Sanofi – Aventis employees work in a unique sterile drug manufacturing environment called the “White Zone.” To avoid contamination, production workers are required to put on and take off specialized protective clothing and also required walk substantial distances to and from their work stations. Even though Sanofi – Aventis has been on notice for many months that they are required to pay for all working time, the company has not changed its pay practices.”

Among the work duties that the Sanofi – Aventis workers at the Kansas City facility allege that they have not been paid for are: (1) changing into the required sterile scrubs, transition shoes, protective jumpsuits, safety glasses, hair nets, bear guards and protective booties; and (2) walking to and from the changing areas, work areas and break areas.

Mr. Hanson added that his firm is currently investigating whether the same practices are occurring at other Sanofi – Aventis facilities across the United States. In the Kansas City facility alone, Mr. Hanson stated the class of employees eligible to join the case would number in the many hundreds. “Paying employees for all the time they work is not a novel or controversial concept” Mr. Hanson said. “It is time for Sanofi – Aventis to comply with the law.”

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