



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

PRESS RELEASE

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United States Attorney, District of Colorado

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JAMES ROBERT SOYARS SENTENCED FOR IMPROPER ASBESTOS HANDLING

DENVER – James Robert Soyars, Jr., age 46, of Denver, was sentenced yesterday by Chief U.S. District Judge Wiley Y. Daniel to serve 6 months in federal prison followed by 6 months of home detention with electronic monitoring for violating the Clean Air Act, U.S. Attorney John Walsh and EPA Criminal Enforcement Office Special Agent in Charge Lori Hanson announced. He was also ordered to pay \$435,477 in restitution to Public Storage. Soyars, who appeared at the hearing free on bond, was ordered to report to a Bureau of Prisons facility within 15 days of designation.

Soyars was indicted by a federal grand jury in Denver on February 10, 2010. He pled guilty before Chief Judge Daniel on October 27, 2010 to two counts of failure to deposit asbestos-containing waste material as soon as practical at a regulated waste disposal or conversion site. Both counts are felonies. He was sentenced today, February 8, 2011.

According to court documents, James Soyars, a certified asbestos abatement supervisor, owned and operated Talon Environmental, Inc. Between September 9, 2005 and August 28, 2006, Soyars committed two felony crimes by knowingly violating work practice standards by failing to comply with the requirement to deposit asbestos-containing waste material as soon as practical at a regulated waste disposal or conversion site. Soyars stored and directed Talon Environmental, Inc. employees to store asbestos-containing waste material at a Public Storage location at 5500 West Hampden, in Denver, Colorado. Public Storage was not a regulated waste disposal or conversion site authorized to receive asbestos-containing waste material. Soyars did not properly label the bags containing the asbestos-containing materials. He also failed to mark the vehicles used to transport the asbestos-containing material to the Public Storage location. Talon Environmental was an abatement company that had been hired to remove the asbestos-containing materials which are the subject of this case from buildings which were being renovated in Greeley, Colorado Springs, and Aurora.

“The improper handling of asbestos is a crime because even minimal exposure is dangerous,” said U.S. Attorney John Walsh. “If asbestos becomes airborne, and if it becomes

lodged in a person's lung, the result could be cancer. Thanks to the excellent work of the EPA Criminal Enforcement Office, a man illegally handling this dangerous material has been punished for his crime."

"Asbestos can cause cancer and other serious respiratory diseases and it must be handled safely and legally," said Lori Hanson, Special Agent in Charge of the EPA's criminal enforcement office in Denver. "Anyone who 'cuts corners' by avoiding the costs of handling or disposing of asbestos properly will be prosecuted."

This case was investigated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Soyars was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda Kaufman and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney from the EPA, Linda Kato.