



The United States Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

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CONTACT: CHRISTINA DIORIO-STERLING
PHONE: (617)748-3356
E-MAIL: USAMA.MEDIA@USDOJ.GOV

Owner of State's Largest Asbestos Training School Convicted

Hired Hundreds of Untrained Illegal Aliens to Remove Asbestos

BOSTON, MA - After a two-and-a-half week trial, the owner of the state's largest asbestos training school and temporary employment agencies was convicted late yesterday on charges that she sold training certificates to hundreds of illegal aliens who had not taken the mandatory training course, and sent them out to perform asbestos removal work, for which she paid them "under-the-table."

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan, Michael Hubbard, Special Agent in Charge of the Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division in New England; Bruce M. Foucart, Special Agent in Charge of Immigration and Customs Enforcement – New England Field Office; Tyrone G. Barney, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation – Boston Field Office; Jeff Paula, Special Agent in Charge of the Office of Inspector General, Social Security Administration, Office of Investigations – Boston Field Division; James P. Ennis, U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service; Anthony DiPaolo, Chief of Investigations of the Insurance Fraud Bureau of Massachusetts; and Laura Marlin, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety, announced today that, after deliberating for three-and-a-half hours, a jury convicted ALBANIA DELEON, age 39, of Andover, Massachusetts, of one count of conspiracy to make false statements, to encourage illegal aliens to reside in the United States and to hire illegal aliens; five counts of making false statements within the jurisdiction of the Environmental Protection Agency; sixteen counts of procuring false payroll tax returns, and five counts of mail fraud.

For decades, asbestos was widely used in schools and other public buildings, as well as in homes, for its heat insulating properties. Asbestos was wrapped along heating pipes, and was mixed into ceiling and floor materials. In the 1970's, once it became known that airborne asbestos could cause a variety of respiratory illnesses, including certain cancers, the federal and state governments banned most of its uses. Since then, the EPA, through state governments have regulated the removal of asbestos from buildings by, among other things, mandating that asbestos workers must obtain a state issued license after having completed a training course.

From approximately 2001 to 2006, DELEON owned and operated Environmental Compliance Training ("ECT"), a certified asbestos training school located at 2 Charles Street in Methuen. ECT normally offered training courses on a weekly basis at its Methuen offices. Nevertheless, many of the recipients of the certificates never took the required course. Instead, with DELEON's knowledge and approval, ECT's office employees issued certificates of course completion to hundreds of individuals who did not take the course. These individuals filed the certificates with the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety ("DOS") in order to

be authorized to work in the asbestos removal industry. Many of the recipients were illegal aliens who wished to skip the four-day-long course so that they would not forego a week's pay.

Because ECT's training course records were subject to inspection, DELEON sought to cover up ECT's practice of issuing certificates to untrained applicants by having the applicants sign final examination answer sheets that already had been completed and graded, which she maintained in ECT's files. ECT issued training certificates; at trial, estimates of the number of those individuals who had not taken the necessary training ranged from 65% to 80%.

Most of these individuals were employed by Methuen Staffing, DELEON's temporary employment agency that specialized in asbestos demolition. She sent these employees to job sites throughout Massachusetts, including the Boston, Worcester, and New Bedford-Fall River areas, as well as to New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut and beyond. DELEON paid most of these employees under-the-table, that is, without taxes withheld, and reported to the IRS and her workers compensation insurance carriers only those employees that actually had taxes withheld. This enabled her to save over a million of dollars in tax and insurance payments.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan said, "For her own personal gain, the defendant engaged in a pattern of conduct that directly undermined the Government's ability to protect the public from asbestos exposure by exploiting hundreds of migrant laborers. She will now be held accountable for these very serious crimes."

Michael Hubbard, Special Agent in Charge of EPA's Criminal Investigation Division, said, "Exposure to asbestos can cause serious illness, so workers must be properly trained and certified to make sure that asbestos demolition and removal is done safely and legally. Yesterday's conviction shows that neither the public nor the government will tolerate those who risk the public's health by putting illegal financial gain ahead of their obligation to obey the law."

"The potential health risks associated with untrained workers doing this kind of work, is very disturbing" said Bruce M. Foucart, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Office of Investigations in Boston. "Couple this with the fact that most of the employees were in the U.S. illegally with unknown backgrounds, and you have a mix that makes for a significant public safety threat."

Jeffrey Paula, Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General said, "The Office of the Inspector General is proud to be associated with this joint investigation."

DELEON is scheduled to be sentenced on February 17, 2008 before United States District Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton.

DELEON faces up to five 5 imprisonment on each count, except for the mail fraud counts, which carry 20 year maximum sentences.

The case was investigated by the Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation; Social Security Administration - Office of Inspector General; U.S. Department of State; and the Massachusetts Insurance Fraud Bureau. The Government was assisted in the investigation with information provided by the Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan F. Mitchell of Sullivan's Economic Crimes Unit and Special Assistant United States Attorney Peter W. Kenyon, a EPA senior criminal enforcement attorney.