



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **MADIGAN JOINS CITY OF CHICAGO IN LAWSUIT AGAINST OWNER FOR ALLEGED ASBESTOS REMOVAL VIOLATIONS AT DOWNTOWN BUILDING**

Chicago — Joined by the City of Chicago, Attorney General Lisa Madigan has filed suit against the owner of a building at 1945 S. Halsted St. alleging that workers improperly removed and disposed of materials found to contain asbestos.

Podmajersky, Inc., is the owner of the commercial office building and was named as defendant in the lawsuit filed Thursday, June 1, in Cook County Circuit Court.

According to the lawsuit, in June 2005, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) inspected a site in Harvey where construction debris had allegedly been improperly disposed of and traced the debris to buildings owned or managed in the 1800 and 1900 blocks of South Halsted by the defendant. A September 2005 request by IDPH to inspect the properties was rejected by the defendant's attorney. However, in late September, while at the properties in question, IDPH personnel observed an open dumpster, allegedly filled to capacity with demolition debris.

In October 2005, Podmajersky's attorney supplied IDPH with a list of projects for which no asbestos building inspections had been performed prior to beginning renovation and then accompanied the IDPH and the City of Chicago's Department of Environment during its inspection of the 1945 S. Halsted St. building. Floor tiles on the first and third floors had allegedly been removed along with plaster from the vestibule and insulation from pipes in the basement. While at the site, one of Podmajersky's representatives told the IDPH and City personnel that none of the workers were trained in asbestos removal and disposed of the pipe insulation in garbage cans in the basement.

With the exception of the plaster samples, laboratory analysis confirmed that various forms of asbestos were contained in the samples removed by IDPH inspectors at 1945 S. Halsted St. Asbestos is regulated as a hazardous air pollutant because it is a carcinogen.

"The health and safety of the tenants and workers in this building were placed in real danger by the defendant's violations of the laws that govern the handling of asbestos," Madigan said.

“We take these violations very seriously and hope that this case sends a clear message to other property owners engaged in asbestos removal,” City of Chicago Corporation Counsel Mara Georges said.

Madigan and the City’s complaint charged Podmajersky, Inc., with 11 counts of alleged asbestos handling and removal violations including air pollution, failure to adequately wet asbestos containing materials and violating the requirements governing their handling, storage and disposal. Each violation of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act carries a possible civil penalty of \$50,000 and an additional \$10,000 for each day the violations continued. Eight additional counts stemming from the IDPH’s investigation and referral seek a civil penalty of \$1,000 per day for each violation of the Illinois Commercial Public Building Asbestos Abatement Act. Finally, the lawsuit contains three separate counts alleging that Podmajersky, Inc., failed to comply with asbestos abatement procedures in violation of the Chicago Municipal Code and an additional count pertaining to the owner’s responsibility for maintaining asbestos containing material.

Assistant Attorney General Evan McGinley is handling the case for Madigan’s Environmental Bureau. Chief Assistant Corporation Counsel Karen Coppa is handling the case for the City of Chicago Department of Law.

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[Return to June 2006 Press Releases](#)