



August 20, 2013

MADIGAN SUES CHICAGO AREA ROOFER FOR DEFRAUDING HOMEOWNERS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against a home repair contractor for cheating Chicago area customers, including a Chicago church, out of more than \$150,000.

Madigan filed the lawsuit earlier today in Cook County Circuit Court alleging Andrzej Rogowski, of Chicago, solicited business through his two companies – Aster Inc. and Economic Remodeling Inc. – and took homeowners' upfront payments but either failed to complete the work or performed substandard work. More than 50 Cook County residents filed complaints with Madigan's office, reporting total losses of more than \$150,000 for incomplete or shoddy repairs.

In her lawsuit, Madigan cited a complaint from St. Andrew's Missionary Baptist Church, which reported that Rogowski demanded \$54,000 for repairs to the church's roof. During the six months Rogowski worked on the roof, the interior of the church suffered water damage, causing mold and mildew growth. Though Rogowski agreed to renovate the interior of the church, he never did and the roof continues to leak.

"Whenever a contractor demands an upfront payment, that should be a red flag," Madigan said. "I encourage anyone seeking to have repairs done on their home to use extreme caution when deciding on which company to work with. Do your homework and ask lots of questions."

Madigan's lawsuit asks the court to permanently ban the defendants from working in the home repair business in Illinois and to cancel any pending contracts with homeowners. The lawsuit also seeks to impose civil penalties on the defendants based on violations of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Businesses Practices Act.

In filing the action today, Madigan also offered the following tips to help protect families and businesses from being targeted by dishonest contractors:

- Be wary of contractors who go door to door to offer repair services. Ask for recommendations from people you know and trust and, whenever possible, use established local contractors.
- Insurance adjusters must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Insurance, and roofers must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Ask to see required state or local permits or licenses.
- Call the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at (800) 386-5438 to determine if consumer complaints have been filed against a particular business.
- Even if there is a need to act quickly, shop around for the best deal. Get written estimates from multiple contractors, and don't be rushed into a deal.
- Get all the terms of a contract in writing, and obtain a copy of the signed contract.
- Never make full payment until all the work has been completed to your satisfaction, and never pay in cash.

Madigan also reminded consumers that the Illinois Home Repair and Remodeling Act requires contractors to furnish customers with written contracts for any repair or remodeling work costing more than \$1,000. A contract must be signed by both the customer and the contractor. The law also requires contractors to carry at least minimum amounts of insurance for property damage, bodily injury and improper home repair. Contractors also must provide consumers with an informational pamphlet entitled "Home Repair: Know Your Consumer Rights."

Madigan urged homeowners to contact her Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1 (800) 386-5438 to report being victimized by a home repair scheme or for more information about finding a reputable contractor.

Assistant Attorney General Oscar Piña is handling the case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

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