

[Press Releases](#)

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MADIGAN AND COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY ALVAREZ FILE JOINT CONSUMER FRAUD LAWSUITS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez today announced the owner of a south suburban company has been named in consumer fraud lawsuits filed today on behalf of senior citizens and homeowners who were defrauded out of thousands of dollars in deposits for electrical power generators that were never delivered or installed.

The lawsuits, filed today in the Circuit Court of Cook County, allege that the contractor defrauded consumers primarily by taking deposits and failing to begin or complete the agreed upon work and failing to provide the purchased equipment, among other practices. Several senior citizens were also victimized, including one who needed the back-up electrical power of a generator to operate her oxygen machine. As a result of this scheme, affected consumers filing complaints with the Attorney General or the State's Attorney's Office claim to have lost a combined total of more than \$73,000.

Named in the lawsuits is Kevin Hart, the owner and operator of Cedar Electric Generators LLC, and Choice Generators, both at one time located in Illinois. Both companies were owned and controlled by Hart, a formerly authorized dealer of brand name generators.

"We've seen this time and again – companies that prey on the most vulnerable by promising access to vital services like power and electricity," said Madigan. "It's important to research all companies, especially those with offers that seem too good to be true. At the very least, check to see if the company is in good standing with my office's Consumer Fraud Bureau and the Better Business Bureau."

"Consumers who invest in a home improvement, particularly one that seeks to ensure electrical power during an emergency, should be assured that they will not be cheated out of their hard-earned money by an unscrupulous contractor," said Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez. "We are very pleased to join forces with the Illinois Attorney General to seek restitution for all of our victims and to ensure that this contractor never again has the opportunity to prey on senior citizens."

The lawsuits allege that Hart obtained substantial deposits from unsuspecting consumers then often failed to deliver the services or equipment he had been contracted to provide. Hart is also alleged to have assessed fraudulent fees against customers who sought to cancel their contract and failed to return deposits after receiving notices of cancellation. In addition, it is alleged that Hart intentionally failed to provide clients with a viable business address.

It is further alleged that Hart falsely claimed that he would provide services by a certain date, misrepresented that he would provide a particular type of equipment, and failed to inform customers of their cancellation rights.

As of today, Madigan's office has received consumer complaints from nine Cook County residents, nine Will County residents, and two Kankakee county residents claiming to be victims of Hart's scam, including four senior citizens.

The lawsuits seek full restitution for the victims, a court-ordered prohibition against Hart from further engaging in similar business practices, and civil penalties for violation of the Consumer Fraud Act.

Assistant Attorney General Greg Jones is handling the case for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau.

-30-

[Return to November 2015 Press Releases](#)



