

# Sunrise Propane reaches deal in lawsuit over explosion

## \$23M for claimants as well as a fund for residents proposed

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A proposed settlement in the class-action lawsuit related to a deadly explosion at a Toronto Sunrise Propane plant will see the company pay \$23 million to claimants, with a reserve fund of \$8 million for affected residents.

The explosion and fire occurred on Aug. 10, 2008, killing Sunrise employee Parminder Saini. Firefighter Bob Leek suffered a fatal heart attack while battling the massive fire that followed.

"This is a good settlement. Like all settlements, it's a compromise and this is a reasonable compromise," said Harvin Pitch, a lawyer with Teplitsky Colson, a firm involved in the suit. "It was a hard-fought contest and we fought all the way till we had a settlement in place."

Aside from claimants, insurance, administrative and legal expenses would be paid through the settlement.

The blast at the fuel depot at 62 Murray Rd., in the Keele Street and Wilson Avenue area, created a massive fireball that could be seen across the city and forced about 12,000 people from their Downsview neighbourhood homes.

The class-action lawsuit stipulated the area affected was bordered by Keele Street, Highway 401, Sheppard Avenue and Dufferin Street.

The initial blast and subsequent explosions at the propane fuel site could be heard seven kilometres away. Homes, businesses and schools in the surrounding area were damaged.

There are 6,500 members in the class-action suit. Under the proposed deal, some of the money will be used to settle individual claims. Some of the financial awards in the suit include:

- Each resident who was displaced from their home will receive \$200 for the first day outside their home and \$50 per day thereafter.
- People injured in the blast and fire will get anywhere from \$500 to \$50,000, depending on the severity of the injury.
- All insurance deductibles will be paid for claimants, and uninsured property damage can be claimed as well.
- Members of the class action can claim for lost employment or business during the period after the blast.

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will also be partially compensated for health-care services provided as a result of the blast.

The settlement deal still has to be approved by the judge in the case.

There will be town hall meetings to explain the settlement on July 15, 16 and 29, at 7 p.m., at Northwood Community Centre (15 Clubhouse Court).

Sunrise Propane and directors Shay Ben-Moshe and Valery Belahov were found guilty of nine provincial offences in relation to the explosion.