

Secord Ave. tenants launch lawsuits against city, Toronto Hydro

Last Updated: Friday, September 5, 2008 | 9:11 AM ET Comments6Recommend10

CBC News



Smoke billows from the apartment building at 2 Secord Avenue (Submitted by Nikolay Niagolov)

Tenants at 2 Secord Ave., an east-end Toronto apartment building, have launched two class-action lawsuits after a fire in an underground hydro vault forced them to flee their homes

The explosion and fire happened early in the morning on July 20.

More than six weeks later, and after clearance from city inspectors, about 900 residents were allowed back into their homes. But some say they still can't return to their apartments because soot and a strong chemical smell are making them sick

They want compensation from the city, the building owner and Toronto Hydro.

In total, the two lawsuits are seeking about \$500 million in compensation

However, the class actions have yet to be certified by a judge. None of the allegations has been proven in court

Looking for compensation

Lawyer Ted Charney, who launched a \$100-million class action, says tenants should be compensated for time off work, damage to property, living expenses and other costs.

"Hotel bills, restaurant bills, any additional travel expenses, emotional distress in the event that you or a family member sustained significant emotional distress as a result of the explosion happening — and having to move out," said Charney.

Imram Khan is one of the tenants who has joined the lawsuit. While continuing the cleanup his 14th-floor apartment, he says the soot and smell in the building is making people sick.

"They come out from the building. They start throwing up. Some people have headaches. EMS [emergency medical services] came on Sunday four times for four people. Whenever I go outside, I have coughing problems. Sometimes I got

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/toronto/story/2008/09/05/secord-lawsuit.html>

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[a] headache as well, just because of the strong smell from the hallway."

Khan is still living in a hotel room afraid to return home permanently. He says he has been off work all week trying to clean up the mess.

Charney says Toronto Hydro should pay compensation.

"It was their hydro vault that exploded and caused the fire," he alleges.

Toronto Hydro is not commenting until it sees the report from the Fire Marshal's Office.

An earlier lawsuit is demanding \$400 million in compensation from the City of Toronto and the building owners.

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