

Explosion In Harlem May Lead To Further Liability For Con Edison

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On Wednesday, March 12, 2014 the lives of at least seven people and the injuries of many others occurred as the result of an explosion and the collapse of two buildings in East Harlem.

Unfortunately, based on initial reports, it appears that this may be the result of Consolidated Edison's ("Con Ed") negligence and indifference toward the decay of its gas distribution system. If Con Ed is responsible, it would not be the first time according to prior lawsuits that have alleged Con Ed's continued failure to maintain utility systems that have injured or killed New Yorkers. Wigdor LLP has substantial experience in representing victims and their families in connection with Con Ed's alleged reckless prioritization of its bottom line over human life.

In 2007, Wigdor LLP along with the Derek Sells of the Cochran Firm represented Gregory McCullough, a 21-year-old man who hoped to one day serve his country as a Marine. As alleged in the complaint, Mr. McCullough suffered third-degree burns over 80% of his body and was critically injured by a steam pipe that exploded under 41st Street and Lexington Avenue, where he simply had the misfortune to be walking at the time. The complaint in that case referred to Con Ed's "decaying" and "explosion-prone" steam pipes as a "ticking time-bomb" that Con Ed has continually chosen to ignore in an "unconscionable and ongoing public betrayal." Our Firm also represented Judith Bailey, a 30-year-old mother of two who worked at a school for the mentally disabled at the time, in connection with the severe burns she suffered from the same explosion.

Also in 2007, Wigdor LLP represented Ramgopal Oza, whose wife, Kunta Oza, was yet another victim of an explosion allegedly caused by Con Ed's negligence. The facts surrounding Ms. Oza's death were harrowingly similar to the recent events in East Harlem. Ms. Oza was a resident of Sunnyside, Queens, who was in her home when a steam pipe exploded, heartbreakingly resulting in her death. Residents in the area of Ms. Oza's home had complained of the smell of gas for weeks. Our complaint alleged that Con Ed's "gas distribution network still contains thousands of miles of dangerous, antiquated mains in many parts of New York City."

Currently, Wigdor LLP represents Kim Tinnin, mother of Lauren Abraham. On October 29, 2012, Lauren Abraham, a 23-year-old makeup artist and teacher-in-training, walked outside of her home in Richmond Hill, Queens during Hurricane Sandy and came in contact with a severed electrical wire. As with its gas distribution system and steam pipes, the complaint in the Tinnin matter alleges that Con Ed failed to maintain its power lines, putting New Yorkers' lives at risk. The complaint also alleges that Con Ed failed to implement industry-standard technology that would have enabled it to disable downed power lines remotely and could have saved Ms. Abraham's life.

Wigdor LLP is committed to making sure that further tragedies are avoided and that Con Edison invests significant resources in the City's infrastructure to bring antiquated equipment into the 21st Century.



[See New York Times](#) article for more details.

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