

Falling glass lawsuits filed

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Workers remove balcony glass from the North Tower where glass fell in August. The glass fell from the 29th or 30th floor north facing balcony on a Lanterra Building on the North East corner of Bay and Grenville in Toronto.

STEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR

Josh Tapper Staff Reporter

Downtown condominium dwellers launched two \$20-million class-action lawsuits this week after their balconies were closed by developers last summer when panes of glass crashed onto city streets.

The actions state that balconies at Murano Towers, a two-building, 731-unit complex near Bay and College Sts., and Festival Tower, a 378-unit condo at King and John Sts., have been sealed shut since August.

One Murano south tower resident, who isn't named in the action, called the situation infuriating and frustrating. "I feel like I'm trapped in my own home," said Jo Gryfe, 24, who owns a fifth-floor unit.

The lawsuits, filed Wednesday in Ontario Superior Court, were levelled against builders and architects associated with Murano and Festival.

In addition to the money, both actions ask for a declaration from site builders that they were "negligent in the design, installation and manufacturing of the glass panelling" installed on condo balconies.

At least 13 panes shattered over downtown Toronto between December 2010 and August 2011, including 11 linked to Lanterra Developments Ltd., which is named in the Murano action.

On Aug. 15, 2011, glass from the 31st floor of Murano's south tower fell onto Bay St., reportedly slashing a woman's wrist.

According to the action, Festival, which is attached to the TIFF Bell Lightbox, experienced two broken glass incidents, one in May 2010 and another on Aug. 2, 2011.

Last August, Lanterra pledged to replace tempered glass with laminated glass at Murano and a condo near Bedford Rd. and Bloor St. W.

Daniels Corp., the contractor for Festival Tower, and Lanterra did not return requests for comment.

Toronto lawyer Ted Charney, who filed the suits with lawyer Sharon Strosberg, said owners have lost rental income. "If you're buying a condo in downtown Toronto and find out you can't use your outdoor living space, you'd be significantly upset about it," he said.

Defendants in the Murano action include Lanterra; Bay Grenville Properties Ltd.; Toro Aluminum Railings Inc.; architectsAlliance; and H&R Developments Inc.

The Festival action lists Daniels; King and John Festival Corp.; KPMB Design Inc.; Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects; Kirkor Architects and Planners; Toronto International Film Festival Developments Inc.; Toro Aluminum Railings Inc.; and Toro Glasswall Inc.

