

Sunrise Propane explosion: Class action lawsuit gets green light

July 25, 2012



ANGELA DELUCE/THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO Flames shoot up at the scene of a propane explosion at Sunrise Propane in Toronto as dawn breaks on Aug. 10, 2008. The devastating blast killed one man and forced thousands of people from their homes.

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Courts Bureau

A judge has given the green light for a class action lawsuit in the massive Sunrise Propane explosion four years ago.

“This class proceeding will provide thousand (s) of class members with access to justice,” Ontario Superior Court Justice Carolyn Horkins wrote in her decision.

The lawsuit affects residents living in an area of Downsview bounded by Keele St., Highway 401, Sheppard Ave. W. and Dufferin St., where asbestos and debris rained down after the Aug. 10, 2008, blast.

The Murray Rd. disaster forced the evacuation of 12,500 residents and caused more than \$25 million in damages, according to class action lawyers. Sunrise employee Parminder Singh Saini, 25, was killed in the blast during an illegal truck-to-truck propane transfer.

The judge approved the lawsuit against several defendants, including Sunrise Propane Energy Group Inc., several of its suppliers, and The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), the regulator.

The TSSA was aware that unlawful truck-to-truck transfers of propane were ongoing at Sunrise's yard in spite of orders to the contrary and failed to take further action, the suit claims.

Sharon Strosberg, one of four lawyers in the lawsuit, said notices will be sent to affected residents to see if they want to opt out of the lawsuit. "If you do nothing, you're in," she said Wednesday.

Jeff Green, 44, who lives two blocks from the blast site, welcomed the certification, but said he feared the defendants do not have enough money to adequately compensate the victims.

Meanwhile, closing arguments are to continue next month in the trial of Sunrise and two directors on environmental as well as occupational health and safety charges.

