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Commissioner

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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### AKOSH Cites Anchorage Company for Asbestos Violations

JUNEAU, Alaska—[Alaska Occupational Safety and Health](#) issued citations with a combined penalty of \$72,000 to Northern Lights Center LLC for violations involving asbestos.

“Asbestos is dangerous to workers, the environment and everyone who is exposed to it,” Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. “Alaskans deserve to know that contractors and building owners will take the necessary precautions to mitigate this hazard.”

AKOSH received a complaint alleging business owner Mathew Bobich failed to perform an initial exposure assessment to ensure that workers on a renovation project were adequately protected, and that employees were working on the project without proper training or personal protective equipment.

AKOSH investigators directed Bobich to stop work until an assessment was complete. Bobich revealed to investigators that he suspected that the building contained asbestos. Investigators determined that Bobich acted with plain indifference to worker health and safety.

“In general, any building constructed with building materials manufactured before 1980 is likely to contain asbestos,” said Steve Standley, AKOSH chief of enforcement. “The material is usually found in thermal system insulation and surface materials such as floor tiles, roofing and siding.”

Contractors and building owners are required to perform an initial exposure assessment prior to engaging in activities such as demolition or salvage of structures where asbestos is present. Alaska law requires that companies performing asbestos removal work are properly licensed and certified, that their employees have been properly trained and certified and that the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is notified before asbestos work begins.

“Exposure to asbestos is a significant health risk and should not be disturbed without proper planning, training and equipment,” Standley said. “Asbestos is also regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and individuals can face significant penalties for failing to ensure that asbestos is properly contained to avoid contaminating the environment.”

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