



MEDIA RELEASE

CT Department of Labor *Communications Office*
Glenn Marshall, Commissioner

Labor Department Finds Wage Violations, Issues Stop Work Orders at Site Where Worker Death Occurred

WETHERSFIELD, Nov. 15, 2011 – Labor Department Commissioner Glenn Marshall announced today that the Connecticut Department of Labor has issued a Stop Work order to American Building LLC, of Trumbull, and is investigating the company for unpaid wages to workers totaling more than \$6,800. Additionally, two other Stop Work orders were issued to two other contractors working at the same site, located at 1 Blachley Road in Stamford.

The agency's Wage and Workplace Standards Division issued the Stop Work orders on Nov. 11 after being contacted by workers at the site who claimed checks from American Building, LLC could not be cashed due to insufficient funds. The employees, brothers of Javier Salinas who died at the worksite on Oct. 25 after falling from a roof, reported to investigators that they wanted to use their paychecks to cover funeral costs for their brother.

Upon arriving at the construction site, Labor Department wage investigators determined that American Building, as well as G.J. Courchy of New York and Coritas of North Carolina, had approximately 20 workers on the site that had been misclassified as independent workers, when in fact they should be considered employees of the companies. American Building is a subcontractor for AP Construction while G.J. Courchy and Coritas are subcontractors for Merritt Contractors of Bridgeport.

All three companies were issued Stop Work orders when they were unable to show proof of the required Workers' Compensation coverage or were found to be misclassifying their workers as independent contractors. Under Connecticut law, employers found to be in violation face a penalty of \$300 a day per worker, per incident, and any work at the site can not be resumed until proof of coverage and any other violations are corrected.

In addition, wage investigators are continuing to review the issue of failure to pay wages and have determined that American Building violated state law when it issued bad checks totaling at least \$6,800.

Salinas, of Danbury, fell more than 50 feet from an unfinished roof while working at the construction site. Although federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration officials continue to investigate, preliminary reports note that Salinas was not wearing a harness or straps while on the roof.

According to Marshall, investigators are examining the pay records of all companies with workers at the site to determine any other cases of failure to pay wages or overtime. He noted that it is critical that these types of violations are detected and that employers operate their businesses within required state and federal laws.

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