



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contacts:
press@oag.state.md.us
410-576-7009

**Attorney General Brown and Maryland Department of the
Environment File Lawsuit Against Owner of Baltimore Television
Tower for Alleged Lead Paint Violations**
*Complaint Seeks Financial Penalties, Orders to Clean Up and Prevent Further
Spread of Lead Paint Chips, Continue Outreach to Affected Communities*

BALTIMORE (May 5, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown and Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain today announced the filing of a [lawsuit](#) against Television Tower Inc., the owner of the tower on Baltimore’s Television Hill, and Skyline Tower Painting Inc. for alleged violations of Maryland law that led to lead paint chips raining down on the surrounding communities.

The complaint, filed today in Baltimore City Circuit Court, describes a project to remove lead paint from the iconic “candelabra” television tower that was carried out with little-to-no containment methods by an unaccredited contractor. The complaint describes the health hazards that lead paint exposure presents to young children, stating: “Areas that paint scrapings were found include a child daycare center, a local playground and park, a college athletic field, and various residences as far as one-half mile away.”

“We cannot have industrial contractors risk public health in large swaths of Maryland communities by conducting unsafe lead abatement projects by untrained, unaccredited workers. In this case, lead literally rained down on thousands of people, including children,” said Attorney General Brown. “Lead paint disproportionately affects children, especially those living in overburdened communities, and its harmful effects can be lifelong.”

“This enforcement action assigns accountability for the health hazards that were literally cast upon a community and its children,” said Secretary McIlwain. “The Maryland Department of the Environment is committed to protecting children across the state, and especially those in underserved communities, from the dangers of lead-based paint.”

The complaint names as defendants Television Tower Inc. (TTI), an entity formed by Baltimore television broadcasting companies WJZ-TV, WBAL-TV, and WMAR-TV, and Skyline Tower Painting Inc. It alleges that in May 2022, TTI, knowing the 1,000-foot tower that it owns

contained lead-based paint, hired Skyline, which was not accredited, to provide lead abatement services in Maryland in order to repaint the tower.

Skyline removed lead paint from the tower by scraping and hydroblasting with minimal controls, the complaint alleges. The force of the hydroblasting and high winds at the height of the tower caused the spread of lead paint dust and chips to spread as far as half a mile, an area that includes four census tracts defined under state law as underserved communities.

The work was performed from late May 2022 through mid June 2022, when MDE received a complaint that paint fragments had fallen into nearby neighborhoods. Although TTI and Skyline were ordered to stop work and efforts were begun to clean up debris in the surrounding neighborhood, the tower is still not properly contained, and paint chips are still falling. Earlier this year, MDE began soil sampling to assess contamination due to the spread of lead paint into the community. The complete report of the sampling results is pending.

Lead-containing paint is a known and recognized threat to public health. It is the most common source of lead exposure in children, either through ingestion or inhalation of lead paint dust. Additionally, repeated low-level exposure to lead can bring cumulative and aggregated effects. Due to their developmental stages, children six years of age and younger are particularly at risk of impact from lead exposure, the effects of which are irreversible.

In the complaint, MDE asks the court to enter injunctions directing the defendants to stabilize and contain the tower to prevent additional paint chips from being released; continue to recover visible lead paint chips in at least a half-mile radius; use properly accredited workers employing proper work practices to complete the work on the tower; and continue with outreach and notifications to the affected communities.

The complaint also seeks financial penalties of up to \$25,000 per day for lead accreditation, lead abatement performance, and hazardous waste violations and up to \$10,000 per day for solid waste, open dumping, and nuisance creation violations. MDE is also seeking reimbursement for costs incurred in response to a release or a threatened release of a hazardous substance, including the costs associated with the soil sampling of the tower grounds and surrounding communities.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/050523.pdf>