

Families of women killed in roof collapse sue company

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THE GAZETTE

The families of three women who died when the roof of the factory where they were working collapsed are suing the company, alleging negligence, and asking for more than \$700,000 in damages.

Sharon Kirkpatrick, 62, Barbara Elliott, 54, and Marilyn Heights on March 12, 2008, when the roof of the ware-

house of Gourmet du Village collapsed under the weight of heavy snow.

In a civil suit filed yesterday afternoon at the Montreal courthouse, the families named the employer of the women, Concept Mike and Linda Tott, which owns Gourmet du Village, as being responsible for the roof collapse. Company co-owner Mike Tott was also named in the suit, which was filed in Quebec Superior Court.

"The families still have a lot of pain," lawyer Joshua Borenstein said. "But they also want to avoid a similar thing from happening in the future."

The suit claims that after two snowstorms on March 5 and March 8, Tott should have heeded warnings both from the authorities and from the news media to shovel the snow off the flat roof of the warehouse.

"Those were the two biggest snowfalls of the year,"

Borenstein said.

The suit goes on to claim that after the second snowstorm, employees noticed a crack in the ceiling and that one of the doors did not open properly, and told Tott to get the roof shovelled.

"By their fault and negligence to remove the snow, the defendants are responsible for the deaths of (Kirkpatrick, Elliott and Ofaza), and are liable to indemnify for the damages suffered by plaintiffs,"

the suit concludes.

The families are seeking damages of more than \$700,000, to make up for loss of income and funeral costs, as well as punitive damages. The amount is to be divided among the families.

The Gourmet du Village is also fighting a finding by Quebec's workplace safety board, the CSST, which found the company to be at fault for fail-

collapse under heavy snow. The company is contesting the CSST's November 2008 finding in court.

Gourmet du Village faces a fine of up to \$20,000 if a Quebec Superior Court judge upholds the CSST ruling.

Reached yesterday evening, Mike Tott said he had no comment because he hadn't had a chance to review the suit.

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1. How was the company Gourmet du Village negligent?

2. How did the company's negligence cause the death of the workers?

3. How does the government *act* to protect the welfare of the people (workers) regarding snow removal?

4. What evidence on the building showed that there was a problem?

5. How did the workers participate in safety?

6. What does indemnify mean?

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7. What is the name of the government agency that found the company Gourmet du Village to be at fault for failing to properly supervise renovations? Use their **Acronym**. Ex: Federal Bureau of Investigators, FBI.
