



EXECUTIVE OFFICES
280 BROADWAY, 7th FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 566-5000, TTY: (212) 566-4769

*For Immediate Release:
July 20, 2011*

**BUILDINGS COMMISSIONER ROBERT LIMANDRI AND INVESTIGATION
COMMISSIONER GILL HEARN ANNOUNCE REVOCATION OF WILLIAM
RAPETTI'S RIGGER AND CRANE OPERATOR LICENSES**

*Administrative Law Judge Finds William Rapetti's Actions Caused the Fatal Tower
Crane Collapse in March 2008*

Judge Recommends Revocation of Mr. Rapetti's Rigger and Crane Operator Licenses

Buildings Commissioner Robert LiMandri and Department of Investigation Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn today announced the revocation of William Rapetti's tower crane rigger and crane operator licenses following a proceeding at the City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. Mr. Rapetti was the licensed tower crane rigger responsible for erecting a tower crane at 303 E. 51st St. in Manhattan when it collapsed on March 15, 2008, leading to the tragic deaths of seven people. Following a report and recommendation by Administrative Law Judge John B. Spooner on July 6, 2011, Commissioner LiMandri revoked Mr. Rapetti's tower crane rigger license and his Class B Hoist Machine Operator license, both of which were issued by the Department of Buildings. This revocation immediately prohibits Mr. Rapetti from overseeing the erection and/or dismantling of any crane or operating any crane in the City.

According to his report and recommendation, Judge Spooner found Mr. Rapetti, the owner of Rapetti Rigging Services, Inc., caused the collapse of the 18-story tower crane by violating several local and federal laws and professional standards. The judge determined Mr. Rapetti was using a damaged sling to support the 11,200-pound steel collar on the 18th floor, which fell and struck other collars tied to the building at the 9th and 3rd floors. The judge found Mr. Rapetti failed to follow the manufacturer's specifications by using four polyester slings instead of eight to support the steel collar and by attaching the slings at the corners instead of the middle. Judge Spooner also found Mr. Rapetti failed to pad or soften the slings against sharp edges. As a result, Judge Spooner found Mr. Rapetti endangered the public, and his failures led to the collapse.

"This tragic incident has impacted so many lives throughout the City and is a grave reminder of the importance of taking the proper safety precautions on every construction site," said Commissioner LiMandri. "We have determined that Mr. Rapetti took shortcuts while erecting the tower crane by using damaged equipment and failing to follow the manufacturer's specific instructions. Those shortcuts sacrificed the safety of

the job site and led to horrific consequences. Therefore, in order to protect the safety of the City and its people, I believe it is necessary and justified to revoke his licenses.”

“Endangering New Yorkers by ignoring important safeguards is not the way to do construction in this City,” said Commissioner Gill Hearn. “As we saw in March 2008, it can have fatal and tragic results. This administrative revocation underscores that the City will not tolerate professional licensees who cut corners, use shoddy equipment, and ignore construction and crane regulations. DOI and the Buildings Department will continue to work jointly to stop individuals who flout the City's construction and safety codes.”

Following the crane collapse, inspectors and engineers from the Department of Buildings worked with the Department of Investigation and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office on the investigation into the collapse. In January 2009, Mr. Rapetti agreed to a suspension of his tower crane rigger and crane operator licenses pending the outcome of the criminal charges filed against him and his company. Attorneys assigned to the Buildings Special Investigation Unit (BSIU), a joint investigatory unit of DOB and DOI, along with DOB attorneys, prosecuted the case against Mr. Rapetti during a seven-day hearing in December 2010 at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings.

The Department of Buildings also had hired Ove Arup & Partners Consulting Engineers PC (Arup) to perform a comprehensive review of the collapse, providing expert engineering and investigative services. Arup’s investigation included structural laboratory testing and computer analyses of the tower crane’s components, equipment and slings. Investigators reviewed thousands of documents and photographs, as well as the final report from the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration.

New York City has among the toughest crane regulations of any jurisdiction in the world. Since 2008, the Department of Buildings, with support from Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Speaker Christine Quinn and the City Council, increased oversight of the construction industry and implemented more than 25 construction safety laws. Among the laws included are mandated training for all tower crane workers and the requirement of detailed plans for the erection and dismantling of all tower cranes. The Department also overhauled the Cranes and Derricks Unit, including new inspectors, expanded inspection checklists and increased training for inspectors. In 2009, the Department also began using GPS technology to track and monitor the on-duty locations of all inspectors.

Contact: Tony Sclafani/Jennifer Gilbert (212) 566-3473

Follow us: twitter.com/nyc_buildings
facebook.com/nycbuildings