



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

80 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900



The City Department of Buildings

280 BROADWAY, 7th floor
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 566-5000

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2008**

**DOB CONTACT: TONY SCLAFANI
(212) 566-3473**

**DOI CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931**

**DOI AND DOB ANNOUNCE THE SUSPENSION OF MASTER RIGGER'S LICENSE
IN INVESTIGATION OF FATALITY AT WEST 42ND STREET CONSTRUCTION SITE**

The New York City Departments of Investigation and Buildings announce that as a result of their ongoing investigation into yesterday's fatality at the 600 West 42nd Street construction site in Manhattan, GENE ALTOBELLI's Master Rigger's license has been suspended. ALTOBELLI faces administrative charges for failing to supervise the dismantling of the tower crane where a worker died.

ALTOBELLI, 56, of Yorktown Heights, N.Y., a licensed Master Rigger, was supposed to supervise yesterday's dismantling of the tower crane, as required by the Building Code. Anthony Esposito, a worker involved in that operation, fell to his death. The investigation has found that unsafe conditions existed during the operation, including the failure to secure the deceased worker's safety harness and a missing safety railing on a platform from which the worker fell.

The Department of Buildings ("DOB") suspended ALTOBELLI's license today. ALTOBELLI is charged with failing to comply with the Rules of the City of New York, engaging in acts that endangered the public, and negligence in the performance of his responsibilities. According to the administrative charges, ALTOBELLI told investigators that when the incident occurred he was not on the crane but was in a "shanty" and was taking a break.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "Safety must be job one on every construction project. The investigation revealed inattention to basic safety precautions. It's outrageous that in the face of well-publicized tragedies an individual would be charged with permitting blatant safety violations on a construction site, 40 floors above the ground. Swift action has been taken to ensure that this message is clear and that safety is preserved."

DOB Commissioner-designate Robert LiMandri said, "This incident was a tragic reminder of the high-risk nature of construction operations. Construction site safety must be everyone's top priority, and today's actions demonstrate there are serious consequences for anyone who fails to follow safety regulations. We will not tolerate those who put workers and New Yorkers at risk."

Charges have been filed with the City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings. These administrative charges are accusations and respondents are presumed innocent.