



CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.
District Attorney

DISTRICT ATTORNEY – NEW YORK COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**D.A. Vance: \$112K in Stolen Wages Recovered
for Electrical Workers at Midtown Construction Site of Virgin Hotel**

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., today announced that AMPAK ELECTRICAL SERVICES has returned \$112,176 in stolen wages to 18 electrical workers who performed work on the construction of the Virgin Hotel in Midtown Manhattan following an investigation by the Manhattan D.A.’s Construction Fraud Task Force (“Task Force”). AMPAK – an unlicensed, uninsured subcontractor based on Staten Island – is expected to plead guilty on September 21st to one count of Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree after meeting the requirement that it repay the stolen wages to the New York State Department of Labor, which will distribute the funds to the workers.

“The Manhattan D.A.’s Office will continue to ensure that hard-working people aren’t stiffed by greedy employers,” said District Attorney Vance. “Thanks to my Office’s Construction Fraud Task Force, and our partners at the New Immigrant Community Empowerment, these workers will have the hard-earned wages they are owed in their pockets as soon as possible. New Yorkers can work with us to obtain justice and recover stolen wages regardless of their immigration status, and without fear of being deported. Please contact us via WhatsApp at 646-712-0298 – you can report anonymously, and in any language. We are here to protect your earnings, your safety, and your rights.”

New Immigrant Community Empowerment (“NICE”) Executive Director Manuel Castro said: “We are proud to have partnered with the Manhattan D.A. to recover the wages of 18 immigrant workers stolen by this unscrupulous employer. NICE receives calls every day from hardworking immigrants who have been victims of wage theft but sadly their cases often go years, if ever, before being resolved. We will continue to work hand in hand with D.A.’s offices to address this pervasive crime, particularly as the economy re-opens from the COVID-19 pandemic and bad-acting employers try to take advantage of vulnerable workers. Moreover, the same employers who steal wages will break other laws, such as safety and health regulations that lead to work accidents and deaths. Employers whose business model is dependent on skirting the law should not be allowed to continue operating in New York. For this reason, we also call on city and state elected officials to address this issue with legislation that will revoke the licenses of contractors that engage in this behavior.”

New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”) Commissioner Margaret Garnett said: “New York City has zero tolerance for wage theft, a crime that undercuts confidence in the construction industry and often raises a red flag to other wrongdoing. As a result of this joint investigation with the Manhattan District Attorney and the state Department of Labor, these 18 workers will rightly be paid their hard-earned wages and the subcontractor is being held accountable. DOI is pleased to stand up today with our law enforcement partners and New Immigrant Community Empowerment to underscore the import of protecting workers from corrupt contractors.”

According to court documents and as admitted in the defendants’ guilty plea, AMPAK was hired as a subcontractor to perform electrical work at 1227 Broadway, the construction site for the 38-story Virgin Hotel. Between January 23, 2021, and March 18, 2021 AMPAK failed to pay 18 of its electrical workers, stealing a total of \$112,176 in unpaid wages. When the workers complained about missing paychecks, they were promised that the checks were coming, or falsely told that the General Contractor had not yet paid the company.

In March 2021, workers reported the theft to the D.A.’s Office’s [Construction Fraud Task Force](#) via its WhatsApp hotline. Workers also contacted [New Immigrant Community Empowerment](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of immigrant workers in New York. NICE referred the cases to the Task Force, and provided extensive assistance coordinating interviews with affected workers.

Assistant D.A. Rachana Pathak (Supervising Attorney of the Construction Fraud Task Force) handled the prosecution of this case under the supervision of Assistant D.A.s Michael Ohm

(Deputy Chief of the Rackets Bureau), Judy Salwen (Principal Deputy Chief of the Rackets Bureau), and Jodie Kane (Chief of the Rackets Bureau) and Executive Assistant D.A. Christopher Conroy (Chief of the Investigation Division). Investigative Analyst Danielle Corbett assisted with the investigation.

District Attorney Vance thanked NICE, the New York State Department of Labor, and the New York City Department of Investigation, specifically Confidential Investigator Olivia Tonge, Assistant Inspector General Dan Taylor, and Chief Investigator James McElligott; for their assistance with the investigation.

Defendant Information

AMPAK ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Staten Island, NY

Charge:

- Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, a class E felony