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Law firm announces its filing of Detroit steam burn lawsuit

Attorneys from Buckfire & Buckfire, P.C., a Michigan-based personal injury law firm, announced September 24 that they have filed a lawsuit on behalf of 20 victims, each of whom suffered burns to their legs and feet from steam emitting from manhole covers in Detroit.

The lawsuit names Detroit Thermal, LLC, Detroit Renewable Energy, LLC and Project Mist HoldCo, LLC as defendants. Detroit Thermal serves commercial and industrial customers in downtown Detroit and provides heating and cooling to more than 100 buildings throughout the greater downtown Detroit area through an underground network.

Project Mist HoldCo, a New York-based company, purchased Detroit Renewable Energy, the parent company of Detroit Thermal, in November 2017. The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) regulates Detroit Thermal.

The complaint states that the plaintiffs suffered burn injuries as a result of the steam rising from manhole covers. According to the complaint, the defendants negligently failed to control the steam that was emitted from boiling hot steam pipes beneath the street and failed to warn pedestrians and others about the dangerous conditions that ultimately led to victims sustaining burns to their feet, ankles and legs.

“The arguments in our clients’ case are clear: these injuries were preventable,” said trial attorney Nicolas A. Vesprini of Buckfire & Buckfire, P.C. “It is now our goal with this lawsuit to instigate operational changes so that pedestrians can safely walk the streets and sidewalks without suffering burn injuries in Detroit.”

The lawsuit states several victims suffered multiple steam burn injuries from manhole covers located near Cobo Hall, Ford Field, and Comerica Park in Detroit, Mich.

“We believe the defendants were culpable in contributing to the 20 victims who sustained burn injuries,” said Vesprini. “We’re seeking to prevent injuries like this in the future.”



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