

## **ASBESTOS-REMOVAL CONTRACTOR TO SERVE JAIL TIME**

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Charlotte Amalie, US Virgin Islands – The owner of the Virgin Islands Asbestos Removal Company was sentenced today to almost three years jail time for breaking federal environmental law during a housing cleanup project.

Cleve Allen George and business partner, Dylan C. Starnes, were convicted in June 2005 of violating multiple statutes of the Clean Air act and providing false statements to federal agencies regarding air monitoring at the Donoe Housing Community (DHC) demolition project in 2001.

George was sentenced today to 33 months in prison along with three years of probation and is required to pay for the cost of baseline X-rays for the workers who potentially may have been exposed to asbestos during the project. Starnes, the former president of the Environmental Contracting Company, had also received 33 months in prison and 3 years of probation during his sentence in July 2007.

George and Starnes were contracted by the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA) to perform asbestos removal work on an old DHC building slated for demolition.

Evidence presented to the court showed that the defendants failed to follow the proper safety procedures in removing the asbestos. During the course of the work, a power washer was used to strip thousands of square feet of asbestos-containing material from ceilings in the building, resulting in contaminated water that flowed into the sewers.

The Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department criticized the men, who were both licensed asbestos professionals, for placing more emphasis on profit than the well-being of others.