



Department of Defense
Office of the Inspector General

Information Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 7, 2005

Asbestos Abatement Company Owner Sentenced in Asbestos Certificate Scheme

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Department of Defense (DoD), announced today that Ethel Mae Holmes, President of Holmes Environmental Incorporated, Norfolk, VA, an asbestos abatement company was sentenced in U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria, VA. Holmes was sentenced to five months incarceration, followed by three months supervised release and a \$1,200 special assessment fee.

On March 23, 2004, a Federal jury convicted Holmes of all twelve counts previously charged in a December 3, 2003 grand jury indictment. Holmes was found guilty of conspiring to make false claims in connection with a scheme to purchase and use fraudulent environmental training certificates obtained through the United States mail. An investigation found that Holmes used the certificates, which falsely indicated that the workers she employed had completed required environmental training, to obtain work from the DoD and various federal, state, and local government agencies. Holmes purchased the falsified training certificates from F&M Environmental Technologies Inc., a Virginia Beach, VA company that previously pled guilty to selling fraudulent environmental training certificates in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

The use of fraudulent environmental training certificates by untrained workers handling and removing environmental hazards can lead to a variety of illnesses and unsafe/improper cleanups. A task force conducted the investigation; consisting of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service (the criminal investigative arm of the OIG, DoD), the Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigative Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration OIG Office of Criminal Investigations, with audit assistance provided by the Defense Contract Audit Agency. Noreen McCarthy, Trial Attorney, Environmental Crimes Section, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC and Assistant United States Attorney Gene Rossi, U.S. Attorney's Office in Alexandria, VA, prosecuted the case.

The point of contact for this press release is Joseph A. McMillan, Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Mid-Atlantic Field Office. SAC McMillan may be contacted at (703) 604-8411.

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