

CSST Task Force

Cozen O'Connor created the CSST Task Force to focus our experience and resources to better expose the recovery opportunities presented by lightning-induced corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) failures. Since the late 1990's, the use of CSST as a way to deliver natural gas or propane in residential, commercial and light industrial settings has increased dramatically. Today CSST has almost entirely replaced the use of black-iron pipe in some areas of the country. However, the expanded use of the product has not come without peril. CSST, unlike black iron pipe, has demonstrated that it has a tendency to fail when it is energized by a nearby or direct lightning strike. The energization of the tube literally turns the product into a blow torch.

Look at any lightning density map of the United States and you will see that lightning is prevalent from the Rocky Mountains east to the Atlantic Ocean. Our experience shows that CSST failures happen throughout this entire geographic area. If you look at any map of the United States you will see that Cozen O'Connor has offices in the same areas and can handle the losses. By tracking the kinds of losses we handle by issue and location we were able to identify CSST as a growing concern ahead of others when we issued our first Alert about this product in September 2006. Since our original Alert, the emerging trend we first identified there has become a steady report of wide-spread losses involving CSST.

Drawing on our vast experience with CSST-related matters, Cozen O'Connor created a special task force to handle these losses. The members of the CSST task force are trained to identify issues unique to CSST losses and handle them in a coordinated and systematic approach. We work with experts across the country and understand the need for a cohesive approach to handle these losses to maximize your recovery. Our attorneys have been exposed to different defenses and arguments throughout the country in CSST cases. We understand what needs to be done to successfully prosecute your case to achieve a maximum recovery.

Experience

Secured a \$1.4 million jury verdict in a case in which a Florida home burned to the ground, due to defective corrugated stainless steel gas tubing, after the gas pipe became energized by lightning. The award represents 100 percent of the replacement costs for the home, its contents and the automobiles in the garage, and was achieved despite the fact that the most significant evidence needed to prove causation was destroyed by the fire itself. Using fire dynamics or other scientific principles, we defeated numerous motions in limine and a Daubert challenge to our metallurgical expert, and convinced the jury that the product was defective and unreasonably dangerous. The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the verdict on appeal.



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