

Lawsuits resulting from a Hatboro apartment explosion that killed six



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PHILADELPHIA - Lawsuits resulting from a Hatboro apartment explosion that killed six people and injured six others were settled Thursday afternoon for \$40.5 million, a plaintiffs' lawyer said.

The June 16, 2001, explosion and fire at the Village Green Apartments started because of a gas leak. Floods from Tropical Storm Allison caused a gas-heated dryer to move away from a wall, breaking a gas pipe. People weren't leaving the building because of the floods, so when the explosion happened, six people died, officials said.

[Thomas R. Kline](#), the lawyer for 11 of the plaintiffs, said the gas pipe was inadequately secured to the basement wall. He said the landlords should have known about the potential for disaster because the dryer had to be removed from the building after flooding caused by Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

The landlord, the company that owned the laundry equipment, the gas company and a railroad agreed to the settlement. Kline said the railroad was involved because it owned an old bridge that had blocked flood water from flowing away.

The people who died were Louise Williams, 73, and her grandson Roger Williams, 29; Angelina Malizia, 97, and her son Rudolph Malizia, 78; Ruth Widmer, 83; and John Manlove, 80. Six others were injured as they escaped.