

Parents of St. Croix Student Injured by Falling Ceiling Fan Sue Contractor, VIDE, and Government for Negligence

The lawsuit claims K&J Services was unlicensed and used improper fasteners, and VIDE failed to supervise installation. Parents seek damages for “serious, severe, disabling and permanent injuries” sustained when the fan struck their son in class last Sept.

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Student injured by a falling ceiling fan at the St. Croix Educational Complex, an incident that sparked protests, parent concerns, and now a lawsuit alleging negligence.

The parents of a St. Croix Educational Complex student [seriously injured by a falling ceiling fan](#) have filed suit against the contractor and the government.

In a civil complaint filed last week, Moses Theodore and Denise Joseph say that the V.I. Department of Education and K&J Services Ltd were negligent in the installation of the industrial ceiling fan. William Trinidad, owner of K&J services, is also named as a defendant, as are the Government of the V.I. and Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

Early last September, a male student sustained a laceration to his side when a ceiling fan fell during a morning class period. The boy's injuries necessitated stitches at the Juan F. Luis hospital emergency room, and [prompted a student protest](#) the following day. Complex students decried school officials' reported attempts to downplay the incident, and sought to draw attention to what they say were unsafe conditions in classrooms.

A meeting between the Department of Education and the school's parent teacher organization [was hastily called](#) to address parent concerns, and the remainder of the 150 fans that K&J Services installed at SCEC and St. Croix Central High School [were removed](#). The results of a promised investigation have yet to be made public.

In the meantime, the civil complaint alleges that the fan that fell and injured the student was installed “contrary to the industry standards and without using the correct fasteners.” During a hearing of the Senate Committee on Education and Workforce Development last September, VIDE Director of Maintenance on St. Croix Yauncey Milligan confirmed rumors that some of the fans had begun wobbling as they spun soon after they were installed.

According to the lawsuit, K&J Services was not licensed to perform the work they were contracted to do, and thus the Department of Education was negligent as they failed to perform the requisite due diligence to ensure that the fan installation contract was awarded to a suitable entity. That initial negligence was then “recklessly compounded” by VIDE's failure to “properly supervise and inspect the work being done” during the installation process.

The student's parents are seeking compensation for “serious, severe, disabling and permanent injuries,” in amounts to be determined at trial.

As of press time, there has not yet been any response filed by the defendants.