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Former City of Chicago Employee Sentenced For Bribery

A former senior inspector with the City of Chicago Department of Environment was sentenced to one year and one day in prison yesterday. Michael Cease, 40, pled guilty to federal program bribery on May 17, 2010.

Following a tip provided by a concerned citizen in September 2009, the City of Chicago Inspector General's Office (IGO) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) partnered in an investigation that revealed Cease had taken a bribe to overlook the presence of asbestos in a building he had inspected.

Cease solicited a \$600 bribe in exchange for providing false documentation to the building's owner indicating that an asbestos abatement firm had appropriately disposed of the asbestos. He then demanded additional money from the building's owner, which Cease said was for his boss. This was untrue; Cease had always intended to keep the money for himself. He was arrested after a cooperating witness gave Cease the additional \$550 bribe while the FBI and IGO secured audio and video surveillance.

The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brandon Fox and Carol Bell before Judge Robert W. Gettleman of the U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois.

Cease's sentence included two years of supervised release to follow his time in prison. He is due to report on October 25, 2010.

Anyone with information about alleged corruption in the city permit process is encouraged to contact the City Inspector General's Office either through its hotline – (866) 448-4754, or through its web site at www.chicagoinspectorgeneral.org.

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