

## Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 27, 2012

### **Court Security Contractor to Pay \$1.8 Million to Resolve Allegations That Guards Did Not Undergo Authorized Firearm Qualification Testing**

New Mexico-based Akal Security, Inc., one of the largest providers of security services at federal courthouses, agreed to pay \$1,875,000 to resolve allegations that it failed to appropriately conduct firearms testing in the Northern District of California, the Justice Department announced today. The Northern District of California includes federal courthouses in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose.

Akal Security provides court security officers to guard federal courthouses under a contract with the U.S. Marshals Service. Under its contract, Akal Security must ensure that its security officers pass an approved firearms qualification test and certify the results. The test requires that security officers accurately fire a designated number of rounds within strict time limits. Security officers who do not receive a qualifying score may not work as security officers under the contract.

The United States alleged that from 2007 to 2011 certain Akal Security rangemasters who administered the test did not apply the time limitations, sometimes out of concern that security officers would not be able to pass a timed test. The United States further alleged that the rangemasters then certified to the Marshals Service that the tests had been conducted appropriately when, in fact, they had not. As a result, the United States alleged, numerous security officers continued to work even though Akal Security had failed to ensure they could pass the required firearms qualification test.

Corrective steps have been taken to assure compliance by Akal Security and all affected court security officers are now properly certified. The United States' investigation did not uncover evidence of violations of firearms qualification testing outside of the Northern District of California.

“Those who guard federal courthouses not only have a duty to properly bill for their services, but also to ensure the safety of the individuals who work at and visit their federal courthouses,” said Stuart F. Delery, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department’s Civil Division. “As this settlement demonstrates, there will be a steep price to pay for the failure to satisfy these important obligations.”

“Companies contracting with the government must be held accountable for the misconduct of their employees,” said Michael E. Horowitz, Inspector General for the Department of Justice. “We are committed to ensuring that the taxpayers’ funds are spent wisely and in accordance with negotiated contracts and regulations.”

The Assistant Attorney General thanked the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Justice and the Department of Justice’s Commercial Litigation Branch for the collaboration that resulted in today’s settlement. The claims settled by this agreement are allegations only, and there has been no determination of liability.

12-1168

Civil Division