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## 140 transfers fuel sgt's \$1.2M beef vs. NYPD

By HELEN PETERSON  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A police sergeant is suing the Police Department, saying his career tanked when he suggested that gasoline leaks at his Bronx stationhouse were making fellow officers sick.

Angelo Ruotolo claims in a \$1.2 million lawsuit that his problems started after he wrote a 1999 memo detailing 13 cases of cancer - including six deaths - and numerous other health problems among 50th Precinct cops and their families.

Ruotolo submitted the memo to his commanding officer, and raised the question of whether the illnesses in young, otherwise healthy officers could be linked to leaking gasoline tanks located at the precinct house.

"I was the command safety coordinator. It was my duty ... to look out for and report on the hazards within the building," Ruotolo told the Daily News.

But Ruotolo, 44, a 19-year veteran, said he was reassigned 140 times between October 1999, when he wrote the report, and July 2000, and lost his position as the precinct's safety and training sergeant.

"As soon as I started to ask questions regarding this, I noticed a shift in attitude from my supervisors," Ruotolo said.

The NYPD declined to comment on Ruotolo's lawsuit, which was filed in Manhattan Federal Court.

The suit alleges the city agreed there was a problem and spent months trying to fix it, including purifying the ground soil and installing an elaborate ventilation system.

Ruotolo said he was surprised by the high incidence of cancer and illness among his colleagues. He said cops working in the stationhouse also were linked to 12 miscarriages or birth defects, and eight cases of chronic headaches



"[He] was alerting people in positions of authority that there might be a problem here and he should not have been punished for doing that," said Ruotolo's attorney, William Rold.

**With Michele McPhee**

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