

Victim of explosion wants investigation

Attorney to examine mislabeling

By Robyn Adams

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WATERBURY — Alan Piccolo, the chemical company employee hospitalized after a container exploded in his hands Wednesday, has hired a lawyer to investigate, among other things, whether the product was properly labeled.

Michael D'Amico, an attorney with the law firm of D'Amico, Griffin & Pettinicchi, 560 Chase Ave., confirmed Friday he has been retained by Piccolo and his wife, Gina.

"We are now in the process of investigating, but it's my understanding, yet unconfirmed, that the product had been mislabeled," D'Amico said Friday. "And the question is: who was responsible for the labeling of the product?"

D'Amico said he will not file court papers until the investigation is complete.

"Once it is complete, we will decide the legal ramifications and make a decision as to what should be done," he said. "But this is a significant problem."

Piccolo remained in stable condition at Waterbury Hospital Friday

night. An employee of Pfaltz & Bauer in Waterbury, he was injured when a chemical exploded in his hands as he was opening a glass bottle.

The explosion sent him and three other employees to the hospital for treatment, but only Piccolo was admitted.

Following the explosion, company president Leonard Schwartz identified the substance as dimethyl phthalate, a chemical used to soften plastics. However, a state environmentalist identified the chemical Thursday as N,N-Dimethyl-1,3-Propanediamine, calling it an extremely flammable liquid.

When the container blew up in Piccolo's hands, it sent shards of glass and the chemical into the front of his body.

Piccolo, 28, of Melrose Avenue, had surgery Thursday evening to remove a large piece of glass that had severed a nerve in his arm, his brother, Joe Piccolo, said Friday.

"He couldn't lift up his fingers," Joe Piccolo said. "The nerve had to be re-attached, and now we just have to wait to see if they will regain function."