



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOoffice

Contact: Karen L. Wold
Senior Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: (805) 662-1750
E-mail: Karen.Wold@ventura.org
Approved: MDS *mws*
Date: Friday, July 19, 2019
Release No.: 19-080

Illegal Garage Conversion—Tenants Injured by Explosion

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that Vidal Zuniga Lopez (DOB 06/23/1967), of Oxnard, pled no contest to one count of unlawfully using and occupying a building without a certificate of occupancy issued by a building official; and one count of unlawful conversion of a structure without obtaining a permit for the structure from a building official.

On November 24, 2018, Lopez was the legal property owner of a single-family residence located at 493 Lemar Avenue in Oxnard. On that date, a fire and explosion occurred, causing serious injury to three people living inside the garage at the residence. Although the cause of the fire could not be determined, a subsequent investigation revealed Lopez had been warned by Ventura County Code Compliance on two prior occasions regarding unlawfully renting his garage because it was not habitable nor permitted for human residency.

Lopez was sentenced to 30 days work release and was placed on three years' summary probation including a term prohibiting him from renting his garage to tenants without a required permit.

###

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

Follow the Ventura County District Attorney's Office on Twitter @VenturaDAOoffice