

Burn Victim Sues Chinese Phone Subsidiary ZTE USA Over House Fire

Attorneys at Texas-based **Deans & Lyons** and Brian Branch of New Mexico are suing ZTE USA, the domestic subsidiary of the Chinese cell phone company ZTE Corp., on behalf of a New Mexico man who suffered life-altering burn injuries he attributed to his recently purchased ZTE ZMax Pro Blu phone catching fire while he slept.

According to a release from the firm, the fire occurred after Jose Perez of Bernalillo County, New Mexico, plugged in the phone he had bought just weeks earlier, placing it beside his bed to charge. According to the lawsuit, the phone overheated and ignited while he slept. Perez sustained second- and third-degree burns that left him in critical condition. Still hospitalized nearly nine months later, Perez has had multiple surgeries and skin grafts, and is permanently disabled.

“We believe this phone was dangerous and the manufacturer knew it,” said Deans & Lyons co-founder Michael Lyons, who represents Perez. “We can demonstrate that this phone did not meet recognized industry standards concerning its Chinese manufactured lithium ion battery and its charging system.”

The suit alleges the ZTE phone uses a non-standard, terraced-cell design with non-compliant overhang between the electrodes, leaving it susceptible to overheating, exponentially increasing fire risks, according to the lawsuit.

“Cutting corners is an extension of ZTE’s corporate conduct that includes misappropriation of U.S. intellectual property, lying to the U.S. Government, and, according to the Pentagon, threatening the security of the United States. We intend to hold them accountable for this tragedy,” said Lyons.

The lawsuit, filed July 23, is *Jose Antonio Perez v. ZTE (USA), Inc., MetroPCS Texas, LLC, and Ultimate Wireless CSR, LLC*, Cause No. D-101-CV-2018-02167 in New Mexico's First Judicial District Court in Santa Fe County.