

# Parents sue company after son's avalanche death

By AP

ANCHORAGE – The parents of a 26-year-old Truckee snowboarder who died after an Alaska avalanche have filed a federal lawsuit against a heli-skiing company, alleging it failed to assess the danger in the area.

Nickolay Dobov died after the March 2012 Haines-area avalanche hit a group of skiers. Dodov was flown to Seattle for treatment and died there the following day.

The Takhin Ridge avalanche also killed 35-year-old Rob Liberman of Telluride, Colo., who was guiding the group for tour provider Alaska Heliskiing, based in Haines. Liberman was found dead after the snowslide.

Natalia and Alex Dodov allege Alaska Heliskiing also failed to provide more than one guide and adequate radios, among other complaints, the *Alaska Dispatch News* reported. The couple also alleges the company used misleading marketing that implied reduced risks.

A voicemail message left at a telephone number listed for the company was not immediately returned Friday.

Alaska state troopers said 6 to 8 feet of snow buried Nickolay Dobov and Liberman. Everyone in the group was wearing avalanche beacons, and a second nearby group of skiers rushed to help uncover those hit by the snow.

The wrongful-death lawsuit was filed July 16 in U.S. District Court. It seeks an unspecified amount of money, including money for funeral and burial expenses, and to promote backcountry snow safety.

An earlier lawsuit was filed in state court in February, and the venue has since been moved to federal District Court.

Alaska Heliskiing is expected to respond to the lawsuit by Aug. 20.

After their son's death, the Dodovs created a nonprofit foundation promoting snow sports safety and awareness, and have sought sanctions against the company. They allege Alaska Heliskiing "sought profit above safety," according to court records.

The couple also wrote to five U.S. senators last year, urging Congress to investigate.