

PSC Safety Fax

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GUYMON, OKLA., COMPANY CITED FOR EXPOSING WORKERS TO SAFETY HAZARDS OSHA PROPOSES \$70,650 IN PENALTIES

DALLAS -- A gas processing company failed to properly maintain pressure vessels used to store carbon dioxide and follow safety standards to prevent hazardous conditions, according to citations issued to Reliant Processing Group by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor. Proposed penalties total \$70,650.

OSHA began its investigation Oct. 8, 2002, at the company's worksite in Guymon, Okla. Reliant Processing, which processes carbon dioxide gas, is headquartered in Odessa, Texas. The company employs about 125 workers, 10 of whom work at the Guymon plant. "Employers must provide a safe and healthful environment to prevent injuries and fatalities," said James Brown, OSHA's area director in Oklahoma City.

The company was cited with one alleged willful, four alleged serious and three alleged other-than-serious violations of the OSHA standards. The alleged willful violation was for failing to properly maintain pressure vessels used to store liquid carbon dioxide. A willful violation is defined as an intentional disregard of or plain indifference to the requirements of the OSHA law and regulations.

The four alleged serious violations were for failing to train employees on the purpose and function of energy control, failing to implement or maintain a written hazard communication plan, failing to provide training on hazardous chemicals in the work area and failing to provide lockout/tagout procedures for energized equipment. A serious violation is one in which there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

The three alleged other-than-serious violations were for failing to provide an effective hearing conservation program for employees exposed to noise that exceeds safety levels, failing to provide training to workers utilizing powered industrial trucks and failing to post signs in conspicuous places that prohibit smoking. An other than serious violation is a hazardous condition that would probably not cause death or serious physical harm, but would have a direct and immediate relationship to the safety and/or health of the employees.

A worker's death at the Reliant Processing Group in Muleshoe, Texas, in September prompted the investigation of the Guymon Reliant plant. The Muleshoe investigation, conducted by OSHA's Lubbock area office, resulted in citations with penalties totaling \$70,000. **OSHA News Release**

WHO SAYS OSHA NEEDS AN ERGONOMICS STANDARD?

Inspectors used the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to cite an Oklahoma metal products manufacturer for alleged ergonomic issues related to material handling.

Security Metal Products Corp., Clinton, Okla., which manufactures custom door frames, faces proposed fines of \$102,600 for one alleged willful, five alleged serious, and four alleged repeat violations.

The alleged willful violation is for lack of or inadequate guarding at the point of operation on press brakes. The company is also being cited for ergonomic issues related to material handling. The alleged serious violations include failure to use lockout/tagout procedures; failure to guard mechanical power press flywheels; failure to protect against accidental activation of foot pedals; and failure to report mechanical power press point-of operation injuries. **Safety Currents March 17, 2003**

Weekly Safety Meeting

THE PROBLEM OF SORE BACKS

We have a man with a mind; standing erect, with a spine and a back evolved by nature to function in a horizontal position. This support structure is a compromise between mobility and stability. The spinal column is made up of 24 pieces of bone tied together with ligaments, intervertebral discs and joints. It is freely mobile in any direction. Useful stability is achieved by a structure of checks and balances made up of muscles and ligaments under the control of the nervous system.

His back, with its supporting ligaments, discs, muscles, nerves and disks, is subject to a multitude of disease conditions which cause discomfort and disability (a sore back). He probably has an honest erroneous belief that most sore backs come from strains (injury). He doesn't know about all the other causes. He is usually working for someone besides himself. He sometimes does have damage to his back from acute or chronic injury.

What can we do about it?

We can't change the anatomy a person was born with or the diseases he may be heir to. We can learn to appreciate the nature of the sore back problem and how to live with it so that we do not antagonize employees with sore backs and thereby stimulate unjust claims. There is nothing to be gained by getting "teed off" and giving the impression you doubt a person's word, or that he is faking. He probably does have a sore back and resents any doubt of it.

- ! We can give adequate medical and surgical care to the individual with a definite injury.
- ! We can avoid some erroneous claims of back strains by having, as a matter of record; thorough accurate histories, examinations and investigations at the time of a reported accident, and by early x-rays which may show curvatures, Arthritis anomalies and convince the person he has an already existing condition which has caused his sore back.
- ! We can carry on a program of education for our employees as to the true causes of most sore backs.
- ! We can stop thinking and talking of sore backs in terms of strain (injury). Call them sore backs.
- ! We can place the individual with a known vulnerable back in positions requiring a minimum use of the back so that he or she has little or no excuse to attribute their sore back to his work.
- ! We can carry on an active program of health education, especially in adequate nutrition in order to improve over-all physical fitness and thereby diminish susceptibility to the inflammatory and arthritic conditions which are responsible for so many sore backs.

and finally,

WE CAN TEACH EMPLOYEES HOW TO LIFT PROPERLY AND PROTECT THEMSELVES