

Safety Newsletter

October 25, 2024

OSHA investigates MHI deaths; six-month process anticipated



TL;DR: An OSHA investigation into the deaths at Marine Hydraulics International may take six months. The incident is considered atypical, and OSHA will assess workplace safety violations and corrective actions.

- The OSHA investigation into the MHI incident may take at least six months to complete.
- Workers referred to the fatalities at MHI as a "freak accident," indicating an unusual occurrence.

- OSHA has the authority to enter workplaces for inspections and conduct interviews without restriction.
- A closing conference follows inspections to discuss findings and outline necessary corrections for violations.

Why this matters: The investigation into the MHI incident highlights the critical need for stringent safety protocols in workplaces, particularly following serious accidents. With prior violations noted, ensuring compliance fosters worker protection and accountability, ultimately leading to improved safety standards within the industry, crucial for preventing future tragedies.

Texas furniture manufacturer faces heavy fines for safety violations



TL;DR: Artco-Bell Corp. was cited for 24 safety violations after a worker's severe injury due to unguarded machine rollers, facing \$257,183 in penalties and requiring compliance within 15 days.

- Artco-Bell Corp. was cited for 24 serious safety violations after a worker was injured in April 2024.

- The company faces \$257,183 in penalties related to unguarded machine rollers and silica hazards.
- OSHA emphasized the need for employers to provide safety training and effective communication to employees.
- Artco-Bell has 15 days to address violations, which may involve compliance, requesting a conference, or contesting.

Why this matters: The citations against Artco-Bell underscore the critical importance of workplace safety and preventative measures. This incident highlights potential risks faced by employees and reinforces the necessity for businesses to prioritize compliance with safety regulations to protect workers, avoid penalties, and maintain a safe working environment.

Safety and Labor Concerns Persist at Circleville's Sofidel Plant Amid Ongoing Investigations



TL;DR: The Sofidel plant in Circleville, Ohio, has a recurring history of safety incidents and labor disputes, with employees reporting unsafe working conditions, resistance to unionization efforts, and discrimination. Recent fires and multiple OSHA violations highlight longstanding safety issues, while The Guardian's investigation sheds light on employee treatment and management's anti-union stance.

- The Sofidel plant has faced repeated safety incidents, including fires, OSHA violations, and severe employee injuries.

- Employees report that management has ignored safety concerns and actively discouraged union efforts, allegedly using threats and anti-union messaging.

- Recent OSHA investigations have resulted in significant fines, yet unresolved safety and labor issues persist at the facility.

- Discrimination allegations from a former employee add to the mounting concerns, with claims of hostility and termination based on sexual orientation.

Why this matters: For safety managers, the ongoing issues at Sofidel underscore the critical importance of prioritizing workplace safety and fostering a culture that allows employees to voice concerns without fear of retaliation. With OSHA stepping up enforcement actions and workers' rights advocates closely monitoring conditions, safety managers must ensure robust safety protocols, transparent communication, and a supportive environment for worker representation to maintain compliance and employee morale.

Quick Review

Safety audits are a powerful tool for identifying and mitigating workplace hazards, helping organizations maintain compliance with OSHA standards and reduce the risk of injuries. Regular audits not only pinpoint existing issues but also foster a proactive safety culture, showing employees that safety is a top priority.

To conduct an effective audit, safety managers should assess areas like equipment functionality, employee adherence to PPE guidelines, and housekeeping practices. Documenting findings and creating an actionable plan for corrections are essential steps. Engaging employees in the process, such as involving them in hazard spotting, enhances awareness and empowers them to prioritize safety.

Remember, frequent and thorough safety audits are invaluable in identifying overlooked hazards and maintaining a safer work environment for everyone.

Trivia Question:

According to OSHA standards for workplace ergonomics, which of the following is a primary recommendation for reducing repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) among employees?

- A) Increasing the temperature in the workspace
- B) Providing adjustable chairs and desks
- C) Mandating hourly hand exercises
- D) Reducing lighting intensity to avoid eye strain

Last week's Answer: C) Pictograms, a signal word, and hazard statements

Under OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200), all hazardous chemical containers must include specific label elements to ensure clear communication of potential risks. Required elements include pictograms, which provide a visual representation of hazards; a signal word, such as "Danger" or "Warning," to indicate the severity of the hazard; and hazard statements that describe the nature of the chemical hazard. These requirements help ensure that workers can quickly recognize and understand the risks associated with each chemical.

Other elements, like the company logo or a photograph, are not required and do not contribute to hazard communication under this standard. While the SDS provides detailed information, it is a separate document and not a requirement on the container label itself.

Find out the answer in next week's newsletter!