

Alabama Workers Overcome by Fumes; OSHA Proposes More than \$360,000 in Fines

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OSHA is proposing \$364,350 in penalties against Frit Car Inc. in Brewton, Ala., for alleged safety and health violations. The inspection began April 3 when four workers were overcome by vapors while working in a confined space.

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The company was cited with five willful violations with a proposed penalty of \$315,000 relating to:

- Failing to have an assigned attendant outside a limited space work area;
- Not having procedures for alerting emergency services for rescuing workers in a confined space;
- Not having a procedure that would prevent unauthorized personnel from attempting a rescue;
- Failing to train workers who perform work in a confined space;
- Failing to ensure the entry supervisors verified that all the entries were known; and
- Failing to train each member of the emergency response team in confined space rescue.

The facility also was cited with 17 serious safety and health violations with \$47,950 in proposed penalties. The safety hazards include several deficiencies in the company's enclosed and limited space program, hazards associated with poor housekeeping, no guardrails on walkways, unsuitable eye wash and shower facilities, inoperable safety interlocks on a baler machine, no tongue guard on a bench grinder and a damaged tool. The health violations concern hazards associated with several deficiencies related to noise overexposure, the employer's respiratory program and a damaged welding lead on the mobile service truck.

Two other-than-serious citations with a \$1,400 proposed penalty were issued for recordkeeping deficiencies and not properly storing air-supplied air respirators after usage.

OSHA defines a willful violation as one committed with plain indifference to or intentional disregard for employee safety and health. A serious citation is issued when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known. An other-than-serious violation is one that has a direct relationship to job safety and health, but probably would not cause death or serious physical harm.

□ This incident could have resulted in fatal consequences because Frit Car management knowingly violated OSHA safety and health standards, □ said Kurt Petermeyer, director of OSHA's Mobile Area Office.

The company has 15 business days from the receipt of the citations to comply, request an informal conference with the OSHA area director in Mobile or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

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