



“Your Connection for Workplace Safety”
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We're about service, commitment, results, and accountability!

Our Weekly Safety Tip provides valuable and current safety information relevant for Work, Home & Play.

And, you will be kept current on the latest Safety Compliance issues.



SCI SAFETY NEWS OR TIP



SCI OSHA NEWS OR COMPLIANCE



SCI HEALTHYLIVING and WELLNESS NEWS

We want to hear from you! Send us your feedback and give us ideas for future safety topics.

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Safety Slogan

**One safe act can lead to another.
James Lehrke-SCI**

of the week

SCI Safety Tip: Retailer to Pay Nearly \$1M Following Compactor Fatality. Are Your Employees at Risk?

Source: <http://www.blr.com>

Date: August 21, 2014

A large retailer has agreed to pay a fine of \$950,000 and take other steps to settle a worker fatality case. Learn why the company is facing a giant fine, and be sure you're not making similar mistakes.

The case involved the decapitation and crushing of an employee at a Los Angeles area distribution center in 2009. According to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, 65-year-old Roy

Polanco was operating a cardboard baling and compactor machine when he fell into an unguarded opening. The man was killed by the machine's hydraulic compacting arm.

According to the DA's office, the baler that Polanco was using had been modified to operate without interruption. The state claimed that the company willfully violated California OSHA laws. The case was originally investigated by Cal/OSHA.

As part of the plea deal, the company avoided two felony counts related to the worker's death. In addition to paying the fine, the company is required to conduct an audit of all balers and compactors at facilities across the state. The company also waives its right to appeal.

8 tips for compactor safety

Make sure something like this *cannot* happen at your place of business. The Great American Insurance Company recommends the following best practices for operating compactors:

- The compactor area or room should be kept locked at all times.
- The compactor operating key should never be left in the machine when unattended. Only responsible, trained employees should be given keys.
- The entire area (especially the floors) surrounding the compactor should be kept clear of debris and other materials at all times.
- Employees should never climb into the compactor or place hands and arms inside it. Long-handled hooks and rods should be used to clear jams. When performing such operations, the compactor should be de-energized.
- All point-of-operation guards should be kept in place at all times. If maintenance/repair operations require their removal, guards should be replaced before the restart of the compactor.

- Electrical control box doors should be kept closed and secured at all times.
- Never hose down the compactor when the power is on. Turn the power switch to the off position and remove the key before washing the compactor or the immediate floor area.
- Before compacting garbage, the interior of the bin should always be checked.

SCI OSHA News: Are You Liable for Injuries to an Independent Contractor's Employee?

Source:<http://www.blr.com>

By: Paul Lawton

Date: August 18, 2014

Here's a summary of a real court case that looks at an employer's liability for injuries to an independent contractor's employee caused by a safety hazard in the employer's workplace.

The supervisor of an independent contractor called his crew in for a quick rundown of their job responsibilities for an upcoming assignment. "Okay, guys, we have a job lasting several months repairing two cooling towers at the gas company. We're all going to attend a safety meeting over there where the gas company is going to show us a video and hand out a safety manual. I want everyone to pay attention and do a good job."

The supervisor at the gas company ran an informative safety meeting. After the meeting, the independent contractor's supervisor assigned two employees to work in a small dome used to store an ammonium sulfate by-product. They were instructed to perform welding work inside and to construct a doorway to prevent ammonium sulfate from leaving the dome.

The gas company supervisor informed the independent contractor's supervisor about a potential ammonium sulfate hazard in the dome.

For the first 20 minutes, everything seemed to be proceeding smoothly. Then suddenly one of the employee's eyes started burning, and he had difficulty breathing. He and his co-worker quickly left the dome and searched for their supervisor.

"We can't work in there. We can barely breathe," the workers told him

"Just finish the work quickly and come out," the independent contractor's supervisor told his employees.

The workers followed his orders and went back into the dome, but soon one of them collapsed from the fumes and was rushed to a hospital where he was diagnosed with reactive airway dysfunction syndrome.

Worker Sues

While collecting workers' compensation for his injuries, the independent contractor's employee consulted an attorney who advised him to sue the gas company for failing to provide for his safety.

In court, his attorney stated that although his client did not work for the gas company directly, the gas company was responsible for his safety because it controlled the work area.

The safety manual and video were presented as evidence that the gas company was in control of the well-being of the independent contractor's employees. And the injured worker's lawyer told the court that the gas company was negligent in failing to protect the worker.

The Court's Ruling

The gas company was not responsible for the worker's injuries, ruled the North Dakota Supreme Court. The contract clearly gave the independent contractor complete control over the injured employee's work. Also, it was clear that the independent contractor's supervisor directed the details of his employees' work, not the supervisor of the gas company. This meant that the independent contractor was completely responsible for making sure its employees were protected from the hazardous fumes of ammonium sulfate.

What This Means

Generally, a company that hires an independent contractor is not liable for the contractor's negligence. One exception is when the company retains control over the contractor's work. Such control would include directing the manner in which the job was done and retaining the right to supervise in detail so that the contractor is not entirely free to do the work in his own way. Usually this control is spelled out in the contract.

If you do hire independent contractors, however, you should provide them with all relevant safety information about your place of work and warn them of any hidden hazards. Also, be aware that certain OSHA standards, such as hazard communication and process safety, require you to provide this information to your contractors.

In the case described here, the independent contractor was told about the presence of ammonium sulfate in the dome. With this knowledge, it was up to them to carry out the work safely. Had the employer failed to provide hazard information to the independent contractor, however, the result might well have been different.

HEALTHY BITES
Quick Tips for Healthy Living

PREVEA

Heat Illness

Your body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating just isn't enough. Your body temperature can rise to dangerous levels and you can develop a heat illness. Most heat illnesses occur from staying out in the heat too long. Exercising too much for your age and physical condition are also factors. Older adults, young children and those who are sick or overweight are most at risk. Drinking fluids to prevent [dehydration](#), replenishing salt and minerals, and limiting time in the heat can help.

Heat-related illnesses include

- Heatstroke - a life-threatening illness in which body temperature may rise above 106° F in minutes; symptoms include dry skin, rapid, strong pulse and dizziness
- Heat exhaustion - an illness that can precede heatstroke; symptoms include heavy sweating, rapid breathing and a fast, weak pulse
- Heat cramps - muscle pains or spasms that happen during heavy exercise
- Heat rash - skin irritation from excessive sweating

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



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In Loving
Memory of Jessica Lehrke