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OSHA News Release - Region 5

U.S. Department of Labor

May 19, 2017

OSHA finds machine safety hazards, lead overexposure at Ohio steel plant

CANTON, Ohio – Republic Steel, an automotive steel manufacturer, faces \$279,578 in proposed penalties from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (<https://www.osha.gov/index.html>) after agency investigators found workers at its Canton plant exposed to machine hazards and lead.

OSHA found one maintenance worker suffered severe injuries after being struck by an unguarded machine, and at least seven workers were exposed to excessive levels of lead (<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/lead/>), which can cause serious health issues.

“Companies must continuously monitor their facilities to ensure health and safety procedures are adequate and effective in protecting workers from injuries and illness on the job,” said Dorothy Dougherty, deputy assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health.

On Dec. 5, 2016, a 64-year-old maintenance worker suffered a fractured pelvis after being struck by a sail – a large clamp that holds the steel billet – because lock-out devices were not affixed to the machine’s operating parts to stop movement during maintenance.

A second inspection was opened on Dec. 13, 2016, after a complaint alleged workers were being exposed to lead. Investigators documented seven incidents of lead overexposure in the caster facility.

In total, the agency found two repeated (<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/fedrites.html>) and five serious safety and health violations during the two inspections. OSHA found the company failed to implement engineering controls to lower exposure to steel dust particulates; prohibit employees from eating in areas where lead exposure was possible; affix locking devices to machine operating parts during maintenance, and replace damaged guard and stair rails. In the past decade, Republic Steel has been cited for more than 250 safety and health violations at its facilities across the country.

The company is a leading North American supplier of steel bars for automotive and industrial use. The company has 15 business days from receipt of its citations (<https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/newsroom/newsreleases/OSHA20170657.pdf>) and penalties to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA’s area director, or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (<https://www.oshrc.gov/index.html>).

To ask questions, obtain compliance assistance, file a complaint, or report amputations, eye loss, workplace hospitalizations, fatalities or situations posing imminent danger to workers, the public should call OSHA’s toll-free hotline at 800-321-OSHA (6742) or the agency’s Cleveland Area Office at 216-447-4188.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=OSHACT&p_id=2743), employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA’s role is to ensure these

conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <https://www.osha.gov> (<https://www.osha.gov/index.html>).

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