

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

OSHA

Find it in OSHA

For Workers ▾ For Employers ▾ Law & Regulations ▾ Data & Statistics ▾ Enforcement ▾ Training & Education ▾

News & Publications ▾ En Español A to Z Index Contact Us FAQs

OSHA News Release - Table of Contents

OSHA Regional News Release

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs

Region 6

March 30, 2016

**OSHA fines nation's largest chicken producer \$122K
for failures in dangerous ammonia release at Waco plant**
Pilgrim's Pride Corporation allowed similar violations in Nacogdoches

WACO, Texas - Federal inspectors found that the nation's largest chicken producer failed to use proper safety procedures that allowed a release of 79 pounds of anhydrous ammonia and endangered workers at its Waco facility on Sept. 28, 2015. Anhydrous ammonia is a dangerous chemical that can be fatal when inhaled and cause serious burns to the skin.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited Pilgrim's Pride Corporation for two repeat and two serious violations under its Process Safety Management Standards. The company, which does business as Pilgrim's, faces penalties of \$122,500.

"Anhydrous ammonia can have devastating and lethal effects," said Jack Rector, OSHA's area director in Fort Worth. "Had Pilgrim's had the right processes in place, this ammonia release may have been prevented. We will continue to monitor the company's progress as they make much-needed improvements to equipment, procedures and training to keep their workers safe."

OSHA issued the two repeat citations to Pilgrim's for failing to implement proper standard operating procedures with accurate information on safety systems and how they worked. The company's process hazard analysis failed to address issues in the plant. This analysis identifies potential hazards associated with the processing of highly hazardous chemicals. Inspectors also found the company's inspections and equipment testing were not completed as scheduled or documented as required. The agency cited Pilgrim's for the same or similar violations at its plants in Nacogdoches in February 2015 and in De Queen, Arkansas, in July 2013.

The agency also issued serious citations for failing to use proper methods to prevent over-pressurization and explosions in the system, and for placing the control and maintenance room facilities in the engine room for ammonia refrigeration.

Link to the citations: http://www.osha.gov/ooc/citations/PILGRIMS_1094769.pdf*

Headquartered in Greeley, Colorado, Pilgrim's Pride Corporation is the world's second largest chicken producer, and the largest in the U.S. It can process more than 34 million birds per week, or more than 7 billion pounds of live chicken annually. Pilgrim's operates in 12 U.S. states as well as in Mexico and Puerto Rico with more than 35,000 employees, 100 of them in Waco. It is part of JBS USA, a subsidiary of Brazilian parent company JBS S.A. It has 15 business days from receipt of its citations to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA's area director, or contest the citations and penalties before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

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 Fort Worth Area Office at 817-581-7303.

#

Media Contacts:

Juan Rodríguez, 972-850-4709, rodriguez.juan@dol.gov

Release Number: 16-675-DAL

U.S. Department of Labor news materials are accessible at <http://www.dol.gov>. The department's Reasonable Accommodation Resource Center converts departmental information and documents into alternative formats, which include Braille and large print. For alternative format requests, please contact the department at (202) 693-7828 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (federal relay).