

# OSHA cites Albertville company for 19 worker safety violations

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

- February 25, 2011

Fabco Equipment Co., Inc., a manufacturer of food processing equipment in Albertville, Alabama, has been cited by OSHA for 19 [worker safety](#) and health violations for continuing to expose its workers to the effects of dangerous chemicals, noise and electrical hazards. The proposed penalties total \$71,764.

First, OSHA cited Fabco for failure to abate chemical exposure hazards that it had notified the company about in November 2009 and September 2010. Even after being told of the danger to workers, the company failed to train its employees on the proper use and handling of hazardous chemicals used in its manufacturing processes. The proposed penalty for the chemical hazards is \$7,700.

"This employer has continued to endanger its workers by failing to correct hazardous conditions," said OSHA's Birmingham area director Roberto Sanchez. "OSHA has no tolerance for this type of behavior."

Second, Fabco was also cited for four repeat workplace health and safety citations, because even though the company had been warned, it didn't install proper safety guards on machines or correct a known electrical hazard. Also, OSHA says the company put workers' health at risk by failing to obtain medical evaluations for employees wearing respiratory protection and failing to perform a proper hazard assessment so that proper safety equipment could be identified. The proposed penalty for the repeat violations is \$24,794.

A repeat citation is issued when a company has violated the same worker safety or health standard in the past and corrected it, but the violation reoccurred.

Third, OSHA cited Fabco for four serious worker safety violations because it had not developed any lockout/tagout procedures to prevent industrial machines from starting accidentally, permitted two electrical deficiencies to go unrepaired, and allowed some workers to use the forklift improperly.

Additionally, OSHA found seven serious worker health violations. Fabco failed to implement sound engineering controls, risking its workers' overexposure to noise, which could damage their hearing. It also failed to protect employees from particulate exposure, failed to label hazardous chemical containers, and failed to provide proper safety gear during blasting operations and train employees who wear respirators during work. It also did not have a hazard communications program.

A serious violation is one that carries a substantial probability of serious worker injury or death from a hazard the employer knew or should have known about. OSHA's proposed penalties for the 11 serious citations total \$39,270.

Finally, OSHA cited Fabco for failing to obtain a written recommendation for employees to wear respirators, failing to conduct initial monitoring for hexavalent chromium exposure. Hexavalent chromium is a known carcinogen. OSHA also found a deficiency in the company's blood borne pathogen program. These violations were found to have a direct relationship to worker safety and health but not to pose a direct risk of worker injury or death.

Fabco has 15 business days to respond. It can accept the citations and pay the fines, or it can contest the findings with OSHA's area director or more formally before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

**Source:** OSHA Region 4 News Release, "[US Department of Labor's OSHA cites Albertville, Ala., fabrication company more than \\$71,000 in penalties for endangering workers](#)," February 22, 2011