

OSHA Regional News Release

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Region 3

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Contact: Leni Fortson

Phone: 215-861-5102

E-mail: uddystack-fortson.lenore@dol.gov

**US Labor Department's OSHA fines US Postal Service nearly \$300,000
for exposing workers to electrical hazards at Pittsburgh, Pa., facility**

PITTSBURGH, Pa. - The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited the U.S. Postal Service for workplace safety violations related to electrical hazards found at the Pittsburgh mail processing facility located at 1001 California Ave. Proposed penalties total \$299,500.

OSHA initiated an inspection in October 2009 in response to a complaint alleging the hazards. Inspectors cited the Postal Service with four willful violations carrying a penalty of \$265,000; one repeat violation, with a penalty of \$25,000; and two serious violations with a penalty of \$9,500.

"The Postal Service's blatant disregard for workplace safety standards has left workers at this facility exposed to unnecessary risk of serious injury," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels.

The willful violations include inadequate training for employees exposed to electrical hazards, failure to provide electrical protective equipment to protect employees from arc-flash hazards and electrical current, and failure to use appropriate safety signs, safety symbols or accident prevent tags to warn employees about electrical hazards. OSHA defines a willful violation as one committed with plain indifference to or intentional disregard for employee safety and health.

The repeat violation is due to the facility's failure to use approved covers for electrical junction boxes. A repeat citation is issued when a substantially similar violation is found at any of an employer's facilities in federal enforcement states within three years of a previous citation.

The serious violations include the use of an unapproved junction box in a wet and damp location, and a failure to provide voltage-rated tools. OSHA issues a serious citation when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result and the employer knew, or should have known, of the hazard.

The Postal Service has 15 business days from receipt of its citations to comply, meet with the OSHA area director or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. This inspection was conducted by OSHA's Pittsburgh Area Office; telephone 412-395-4903. To report workplace accidents, fatalities or situations posing imminent danger to workers, call OSHA's toll-free hotline at 800-321-6742.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information visit <http://www.osha.gov>.