Dodging Disaster: Omega Protein

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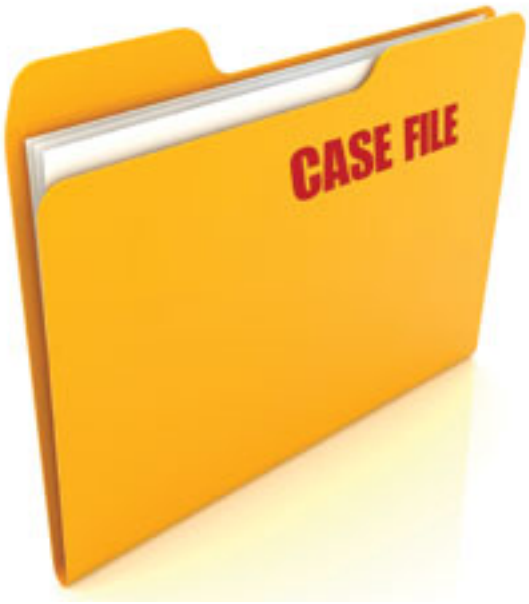

***Chem.Info*'s recurring Dodging Disasters feature details the missteps and safety oversights that led to a recent plant disaster and provides actionable information to help processors avoid the same mistakes. Today we take a look at a recent incident at Omega Protein.**

Omega Protein, Inc.
Moss Point, Miss.
OSHA Citation Date: September 17, 2012
OSHA Fine: $79,200.00

On April 9, 2012, Christopher Hebert died from blood loss after being caught in a rotating screw conveyor at an Omega Protein seafood processing facility in Mississippi. In a report released last September, OSHA cited the company with 25 health and safety violations, 21 of which the agency categorized as “serious.” Among the violations, OSHA noted the company’s:

- lack of forklift training.
- improperly secured compressed gas cylinders.
- inadequate employee sanitation and washdown facilities.
- lack of belt guarding on a hopper and screw conveyor.
- inadequate exit and other signage.

According to OSHA, some of the most serious violations, however, “involve failing to

have employees affix personal lockout devices to a group lockout device, develop a written respirator protection program, [and] develop and document procedures for controlling hazardous energy."

"This terrible incident could have been avoided if the employer had followed OSHA's standards for energy control procedures," said Clyde Payne, OSHA's area director in Jackson, Miss., in a statement published by the administration. "It is the employer's responsibility to make sure that employees are aware of and follow energy control procedures for their protection when working on any machinery."

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