Indiana Glass Factory Pays Record Safety Fines

Associated Press

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (AP) — A central Indiana automotive glass factory will pay a record $495,500 to settle workplace safety violations that were uncorrected following a worker's 2010 death, the Indiana Department of Labor said Wednesday.

An agreement filed with the Indiana Board of Safety Review settles violations at a Pilkington North America plant in Shelbyville, the department said. The penalties for violations and inspections are the most expensive in the history of the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

"This agreement stresses the seriousness of the safe operation of production machinery and will create a significantly safer workplace for Pilkington employees," Labor Commissioner Rick Ruble said in a statement.

Pilkington must post warning signs on or near hazards, provide training for employees and dedicate staff to eliminate all remaining hazards, the department said. Pilkington must correct the safety violations by the end of 2014.

Toledo, Ohio-based Pilkington issued a statement saying "it has always strived to maintain the highest standards and expectations when it comes to the safety of our workers."

IOSHA first inspected the plant after 56-year-old Kelly Dean Caudill of Connersville, who worked 19 years in electrical maintenance at Pilkington, was fatally crushed in September 2010 while repairing a conveyor at the plant about 25 miles southeast of Indianapolis. IOSHA issued several orders to Pilkington to correct safety issues, but a follow-up inspection in early 2012 found that violations persisted.

State officials returned to the 350-worker factory in 2012 for a comprehensive inspection, because employees complained of ongoing safety problems, a Labor Department spokesman said at the time. A second worker was injured in an unrelated accident in October 2012.

Keith Coon, president of United Steelworkers Local 7703, which represents workers at the plant, also signed the agreement between Pilkington and the Labor Department.

Pilkington produces glass for automakers including Honda, Toyota and General Motors.

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