

OSHA Cites Employer, Staffing Agency after Accident

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A Wisconsin-based services company and a staffing agency providing the company with temporary labor were cited by OSHA after a maintenance worker suffered severe burns when he came into contact with an energized electrical source.

Arvato Digital Services, LLC received one alleged willful citation and 10 alleged serious citations over the incident in May at its distribution center in Pleasant Prairie and faces a \$124,000 proposed penalty. Parallel Employment Group was handed four citations, all alleged as serious, and faces a \$26,000 proposed penalty.

Injuries to the 24-year-old worker left him unable to work for more than four months, OSHA said in a press release. The agency asserted the accident occurred as the worker was trouble-shooting an electrical failure on a heat-sealing machine.

"Workers should not conduct maintenance and trouble-shooting without shutting down electrical sources and wearing personal protective equipment," said Chris Zortman, OSHA's area director in Milwaukee. "Both temporary staffing agencies and host employers must train and equip their employees properly."

The willful citation against Arvato stems from OSHA's belief the company failed to implement electrical safety practices for employees. In addition, OSHA asserted that

Arvato failed to require personal protective equipment for employees working near exposed, energized electrical parts. The company also did not develop procedures to de-energize circuits and equipment safely or ensure stored energy capacitors were grounded, OSHA contended.

Both Arvato and Parallel Employment were cited for allegedly not training temporary employees in electrical safety and exposing workers to operating machinery parts on conveyers and press equipment.

OSHA cites as willful those alleged violations it deems to have been committed with intentional, knowing or voluntary disregard for the law or with plain indifference to employee safety and health. Serious infractions are those the agency believes carry a substantial probability of death or serious

physical harm from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

OSHA launched what it called its Temporary Worker Initiative in April 2013 after receiving a series of reports of fatal injuries suffered by temporary employees, many during their first days on the job. Besides stepped-up enforcement, the agency has issued guidance on the respective roles of employers and their staffing agencies for the safety and health of temporary staff and on injury and illness recordkeeping requirements.

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