

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Fines Foundry over \$280,000 for Confined Space Accident

Los Angeles—Cal/OSHA has cited Alhambra Foundry Co. Ltd. \$283,390 for workplace safety and health violations following a confined space accident that resulted in the amputation of an employee's legs. Cal/OSHA [cited Alhambra Foundry](#) for similar violations eight years ago.

On August 28, two workers at the foundry were cleaning and unjamming a 38-foot long auger screw conveyor at the bottom hopper of an industrial air filtration device without effectively de-energizing or locking out the equipment. One of the workers re-entered the 20-inch square opening after the cleaning was done to retrieve a work light from inside the confined space, when a maintenance worker 45 feet away energized the equipment to perform a test. The moving auger screw pulled the worker into the screw conveyor. Both his legs had to be amputated in order to free him.

“Sending a worker into a confined space is dangerous, especially inside machinery that can be powered on at any time,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “Employers must ensure that machinery and equipment are de-energized and locked out before workers enter the space to perform operations involving cleaning and servicing.”

Cal/OSHA's investigation found that:

- The foundry did not have the permit-required confined space program.
- The screw conveyor was not de-energized and locked out before workers entered the hopper, and accident prevention signs were not placed on the controls.
- The worker re-entering the hopper was not monitored by a confined space attendant.
- Alhambra Foundry lacked specific procedures for de-energizing and locking out the equipment.

A confined space is defined as an area that is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work, has limited or restricted means of entry or exit, and is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

Cal/OSHA issued eight citations to Alhambra Foundry Co. with proposed penalties totaling \$283,390. The eight violations cited included one willful serious accident-related, one willful serious, four serious, one willful general and one general in nature.

The citation for a willful serious accident-related violation was issued because Alhambra Foundry had been cited eight years prior for failing to take appropriate measures to protect workers performing cleaning and servicing operations. Cal/OSHA has extensive information on [lock out / tag out requirements](#) online.

A willful violation is issued where evidence shows that the employer committed an intentional and knowing (as contrasted with inadvertent) violation, and the employer was conscious of the fact that what he or she was doing constituted a violation, or was aware that a hazardous condition existed and made no reasonable effort to eliminate the hazard. A serious violation is cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious harm could result from the actual hazard created by the violation.

In 2012, Cal/OSHA launched a [confined space emphasis program](#) to raise awareness of confined space hazards and ensure employers follow proper safeguards.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, is the division within the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) that helps protect California's workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers to improve their safety and health programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). Complaints can also be filed confidentially with Cal/OSHA district offices.

Members of the press may contact Lucas Brown or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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