

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites Menzies Aviation for LAX Worker Fatality: Investigation Determines Menzies' Flawed Safety Policy Discouraged Employee Seatbelt Use, Led To Death of a Worker at Los Angeles International Airport

Los Angeles—Cal/OSHA today cited Menzies Aviation \$77,250 for three serious accident related, one serious and one regulatory violation following an investigation into the February death of a worker at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), who was thrown from the vehicle he was operating without a seatbelt.

Cal/OSHA's investigation determined that Menzies' safety policy on the operation of tow tractors in and around LAX did not require, and in fact discouraged, the use of safety belts in certain areas of the airport. Tow tractors are used to pull luggage and cargo trailers throughout the airport. Menzies was issued citations for one regulatory, one serious and three serious accident-related violations of state safety standards.

"This fatality could have been prevented with a well thought-out and implemented safety plan, as is required for all worksites in California," said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). Cal/OSHA, formally known as the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, is a division of DIR.

Cesar Valenzuela, a 51-year old ramp agent employed by Menzies, was driving a tow tractor the morning of February 21 to pick up cargo at the airport. He was later found with his head pinned underneath one of the tires. Cal/OSHA's investigation found that a portion of the vehicle's seat belt was missing on the tow tractor. State safety regulations require the use of a restraint system such as seatbelts when originally installed on tow tractors and industrial trucks. The employer's vehicle inspection procedures were also inadequate.

"Employers must follow and adhere to applicable safety regulations, especially when workers are operating equipment such as tow tractors," said Acting Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

The Cal/OSHA safety inspector investigating the accident at LAX noted that numerous employees were observed operating tow tractors without using seatbelts or other restraints. Menzies' written safety program only required workers to use seatbelts when

traveling on marked roadways or vehicle service roads, not when traveling to adjacent airport gates or aircraft parking areas.

Menzies Aviation, which has its headquarters in Scotland and operates in more than 30 countries, also inaccurately reported the fatal accident to Cal/OSHA as a heart attack. Regulations require employers to accurately report work-related fatalities within eight hours to Cal/OSHA.

A serious workplace safety violation is cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious physical harm could result from the violation. A regulatory violation is cited when an employer fails to comply with record keeping, posting or permit requirements.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Employers who want to learn more about California workplace health and safety standards or labor law violations can access information on DIR's [website](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Cal/OSHA's [Consultation Program](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Program.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the toll-free California Workers' Information Line at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information, in English and Spanish, on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA District Offices](#).

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