

## N E W S   R E L E A S E

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### **Cal/OSHA Cites Two Companies for Electrocution Fatalities Resulting from Lack of Precautions**

**Santa Ana**— During the same week of July 2014, two of California’s young workers were killed and one seriously injured in separate accidents involving contact with high-voltage electric lines in Mission Viejo and Los Angeles. Cal/OSHA has cited Five Star Plastering and Winlup Painting Inc. a total of \$194,685 for safety violations that contributed to those accidents. In both cases, employers failed to properly train and safeguard employees from the hazards of energized overhead power lines.

“All worksites in California are required to have a thorough work safety plan in place precisely to identify and avoid these types of violent and preventable accidents” 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.

Two 23-year-old employees of Five Star Plastering had been employed as scaffold erectors for three weeks when the accident occurred at Mission Viejo High School. As part of a three-man crew, they were assigned to erect a multi-stage metal scaffold on the football field. Daniel Pohl was working on the top level when his co-worker, Joshua Shetley, looked up from the ground and noticed that Pohl had fallen unconscious. Shetley climbed up to revive Pohl, but was thrown from the 20-foot scaffold after coming in contact with the 12,000 volt power lines. Pohl was pronounced dead at the scene, and Shetley was transported to Mission Hospital where he was kept for two weeks due to serious injuries.

Cal/OSHA determined that Five Star Plastering, based in Laguna Hills, failed to provide its workers with any safety training and also neglected to identify the electrical hazard. Citations for six violations were issued, with a total of \$164,275 in proposed penalties. Violations included one in the most severe category, willful-serious, for allowing work to be performed in proximity of energized high voltage lines. Other safety violations were related to the lack of overhead protection and helmets for workers exposed to electrical lines, and for failure to complete safety measures prior to erection of the scaffold.

“Employers need to be especially vigilant to ensure that workers with little or no experience can recognize and avoid potential problems. Workers who are new on the job are often less prepared to recognize deadly hazards like what happened in this incident” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

At a job site in Los Angeles, Erick Ceron-Alegria, a 26-year-old employee of Winlup Painting, was elevated on a boom lift in order to paint balcony railings. The lift was placed closer than the 11-foot required minimum clearance of a 66,000 volt transmission line and made contact, electrocuting the worker. Cal/OSHA found that Winlup Painting (DBA Certapro Painters), based in Santa Monica, did not properly train employees in safe operation of boom lifts, nor did it adequately identify the hazards of operating an aerial device near high-voltage lines. Winlup was cited \$30,410 in proposed penalties for four violations including two serious accident-related violations.

Cal/OSHA issues citations for serious workplace safety violations when there is a realistic possibility that conditions could result in death or serious physical harm, and willful violations where evidence shows that the employer committed an intentional and knowing violation.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [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 California Workers' Information Hotline 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](#).

For media inquiries contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). Non-media inquiries can contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department