

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites Explosives Manufacturer for Workplace Explosion that Caused Serious Injuries

Hollister—Cal/OSHA has cited explosives manufacturer Pacific Scientific Energetic Materials Company \$293,235 for multiple serious and willful accident-related workplace safety violations following an investigation of an explosion in Hollister that seriously injured a worker.

On December 1, 2016, a technician was preparing explosives in metal tubing, known as Small Column Insulated Delays (SCIDs), for neutron radiation analysis. She had mounted 79 SCIDs onto aluminum support brackets attached to an aluminum metal tray. While attempting to apply tape to secure the SCIDs to the tray, 75 of the 79 tubes exploded. The explosion sent metal shrapnel flying in all directions, seriously injuring the technician.

Cal/OSHA inspectors determined that Pacific Scientific failed to take the steps necessary to protect the worker from explosive hazards. The willful serious violations included the employer's failure to:

- Protect the employee's workstation from the explosive tubes in the holder, despite Pacific Scientific's own manufacturing procedures that require the use of a safety shield when working with the loaded holders.
- Identify, evaluate and control hazards associated with handling the explosive tubes during their manufacture.
- Provide clear written instructions on how to mount the SCIDs safely to a metal tray for required analysis.

"This explosives manufacturer put employees at risk by failing to follow their own safety procedures, and unfortunately a worker was seriously injured," said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

As a result of the inspection following the 2016 accident, Cal/OSHA cited Pacific Scientific Energetic Materials Company for nine workplace safety and health violations, three of them in the willful-serious category with four serious and two general.

A willful violation is issued where evidence shows that the employer committed an intentional and knowing violation—as distinguished from inadvertent, accidental or ordinarily negligent—and the employer was conscious of the fact that what it 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 was a realistic possibility that death or serious physical harm could result from the actual hazardous condition.

This is not the first time Pacific Scientific has been cited for neglecting their workers' safety. In a 2007 explosion accident, an employee suffered serious burns and needed to be airlifted to intensive care. Cal/OSHA issued general citations for lack of required body protection and serious citations regarding the manufacturer's lack of a safety plan. More recently, a 2015 accident caused another serious injury. Again, Cal/OSHA citations noted a failure to identify a hazardous practice safety plan.

Cal/OSHA's PSM Unit is responsible for inspecting refineries and chemical plants that handle large quantities of toxic and flammable materials. Health and safety standards enforced by the PSM Unit, including adequate worker training and participation, are intended to prevent catastrophic explosions, fires, and releases of dangerous chemicals, which could harm workers.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) 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 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 Erika Monterroza 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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