

## N E W S   R E L E A S E

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### **Cal/OSHA Cites Employers for Worker's Death in Confined Space**

**Oakland** – Cal/OSHA cited Artesia-based Express Chipping, Inc. following the death of a 40-year-old worker who was chipping concrete inside a cement mixer when he was struck by a 1,200-pound slab of concrete. Cal/OSHA cited the company for failing to identify the hazards of working within the confined space of the mixer, and failing to train its workers about this hazard.

“Employers have a responsibility to protect their workers and prevent this type of tragedy,” said Christine Baker, director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, more commonly known as Cal/OSHA, is a division within DIR.

Cal/OSHA cited Express Chipping, Inc. for six serious violations and one general violation with penalties totaling \$50,400. Violations included failure to identify confined space hazards, provide proper equipment, emergency procedures and training. Cal/OSHA also cited the employer where the worker's death occurred, A&A Concrete Supply, for failing to inform rescue services of the serious hazards at the worksite. A&A received a serious and general citation totaling \$7,500.

“Confined space hazards exist in most workplaces. Unfortunately, we have found that incidents involving confined spaces often result in multiple serious injuries or fatalities,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Ellen Widess. “It's important that employers identify when their workers must enter a confined space and take the steps necessary to minimize the risks.”

Last February, Cal/OSHA launched a statewide Confined Space Special Emphasis Initiative to focus great awareness and prevention of worker deaths and serious injuries. By simply following the confined space procedures—identifying and labeling confined spaces, instituting and maintaining onsite emergency response plans, and providing training for workers and supervisors—serious injuries and deaths can be prevented. Common types of confined spaces include tanks, silos, pipelines, sewers, storage bins, drain tunnels, and vaults. These are widespread in many industries, and also in non-industrial workplaces such as health care, education, retail and services.

Confined space hazards have had a major toll on workers' lives in many occupations in California.

In May, Cal/OSHA issued citations for nearly \$74,000 to Bumble Bee Tuna in Santa Fe Springs following the death of a 55-year-old worker who became trapped in an oven. Bumble Bee Tuna uses large steam powered pressure cookers to sterilize the cans and cook the tuna. Last October, the worker died inside the oven after he entered to load carts of tuna cans. The employer had not identified the ovens as a permit-required confined space, and did not post danger signs or similar means to warn workers of the hazards of entering the ovens

In April, Cal/OSHA issued nine citations, including eight serious violations totaling \$75,690, to Brand Scaffolding Services after a worker was seriously injured after falling 30 feet inside a tank at Chevron's El Segundo Refinery. Brand was cited for its inadequate rescue retrieval program and fall protection system.

Incidents in past years include:

- One worker was killed and another seriously injured working in a pressure vessel at a co-generation plant in Bakersfield (October 2012)
- Two young workers were killed by toxic gas from a recycling drainage tunnel in Lamont (October 2011)
- A worker was killed after being trapped in a water tank in Napa (April 2011)
- A worker was killed removing paint in a tank in Fullerton (November 2011)
- One worker was killed, another left in a permanent vegetative state and a third seriously injured at a bioscience company in Los Angeles (January 2011)

"We are using all tools available to us—enforcement, education and outreach and media—to prevent more deaths and injuries," said Chief Widess.

Cal/OSHA has extensive confined space hazard materials on its [website](#) to help employers provide safe workplaces and ensure workers know these hazards. Employers can contact the [Cal/OSHA Consultation Service](#) toll-free at 1-800-963-9424 for free help in developing safe work practices in confined spaces.

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.

Additional information about Cal/OSHA is available on our [website](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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