

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Issues Citations Following Fatal Bee Attack on Tree Worker

San Bernardino—Cal/OSHA has issued citations to Hadley Date Gardens Inc. of Thermal for serious workplace safety and health violations following a bee swarm that stung and killed a tree worker. The incident serves as a reminder that employers must protect tree workers from these types of hazards.

On July 3, 2017, a tree worker was spraying water on date palm fruit from the elevated bucket of a spraying rig when a beehive was disturbed. The bees repeatedly stung the worker, who suffered anaphylactic shock and died at the site.

“Recognized workplace hazards for tree workers include bee and other harmful insect exposure,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “Employers must identify and evaluate workplace hazards, and provide appropriate personal protective equipment and effective training to their workers.”

Cal/OSHA issued four citations totaling \$41,310 in proposed penalties for workplace safety and health violations, two of which were classified as serious accident-related. Hadley Date Gardens, Inc. failed to evaluate the worksite for hazardous bee and insect exposure, and failed to establish appropriate safety protocols, which include providing appropriate personal protective equipment and training that could have prevented this incident.

Cal/OSHA’s [Tree Work Safety](#) guidelines specifically cite bee stings as a potentially fatal hazard of which employers must be aware.

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 Peter Melton or Lucas Brown 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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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](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.