

IN Fines Glass Maker \$150K For Repeat Violations

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SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (AP) — Indiana regulators have fined a central Indiana glass factory \$150,000 after inspectors found company managers had failed to correct several workplace safety lapses discovered at the plant following a worker's 2010 death.

Pilkington North America was fined last month by the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration after it conducted a follow-up inspection this spring at the Shelbyville plant about 25 miles southeast of Indianapolis.

The Indianapolis Business Journal reported (<http://bit.ly/RpyB96> [1]) that a July 27 safety order alleges six "repeat" violations by the Toledo, Ohio-based subsidiary of Japanese conglomerate NSG Group.

The Shelbyville plant first fell under state scrutiny after a worker was fatally crushed in plant machinery two years ago. Because the six violations are repeated this time, each proposed fine has increased five-fold.

Indiana Department of Labor spokesman Bob Dittmer said the state agency has launched another investigation into safety violations at the Pilkington plant, which employs about 350 workers who make glass for companies such as Honda, Nissan, Toyota, GM and Mitsubishi.

Dittmer declined to discuss the details of the new investigation.

"We really, really, really don't like repeating violations," he said. "The whole point of our inspections is, really, to ensure that our employer is creating a safe and healthy working environment for their employees."

Roberta Steedman, Pilkington's internal communications manager, said in an email that the company immediately corrected some of the safety issues cited in the July 27 safety order. She wrote that Pilkington "continues to work cooperatively and proactively with (its) employees and with IOSHA to address the remaining citations."

IOSHA began its first investigation of the plant after a Pilkington maintenance worker, 56-year-old Kelly Dean Caudill of Connersville, died the same day he was injured at the plant in September 2010.

Caudill, who worked 19 years in electrical maintenance at Pilkington, was repairing a conveyor that moves broken glass when a nearby air cylinder activated and crushed him under thousands of pounds of pressure.

Rescuers removed Caudill from the machinery, but he died later that day at a hospital.

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Following Caudill's death, IOSAH fined Pilkington \$15,000 for several workplace safety violations.

During this spring's follow-up inspection at Pilkington, IOSHA found the company had the same issues as in 2010, the agency reported. The agency increased each fine this time from the \$5,000 imposed for each instance in 2010 to \$25,000.

IOSHA records allege the factory still lacked proper guards for machinery to prevent worker injury and that certain safety procedures and training plans were still inadequate. The records show managers were still failing to properly audit or review employees' knowledge of equipment that disables or locks machinery during repairs and warning labels required for equipment controls during such repairs.

Inspectors also found that damage to equipment was, as before, exposing workers to electricity currents of 50 volts or more.

The state gave the company until Aug. 22 to address all the issues and pay the fines, contest the orders, or schedule an informal review.

Steedman, Pilkington's spokeswoman, said in her email that the company intends to sit down with IOSHA officials and "will evaluate every issue raised by the IOSHA inspectors to determine if there is an opportunity for improvement."

Department of Labor spokeswoman Chetrice Mosely said Pilkington has scheduled an informal review with IOSHA where the company can discuss details of the safety order while presenting its case.

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[1] <http://bit.ly/RpyB96>