

OSHA reminds employers to protect workers from dangers of handling fireworks

In preparation for July 4th celebrations, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is urging employers in the fireworks and pyrotechnics industry to protect their workers from hazards while manufacturing, storing, transporting, displaying and selling fireworks for public events.

“Millions of Americans will enjoy the excitement and beauty fireworks bring to the 4th of July holiday, but we must recognize the dangers workers in the pyrotechnics industry face every day,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “It is vital that employers take the required steps to ensure workers’ safety and health.”

Last summer, one worker was killed and another critically injured in an explosion and fire at a fireworks storage facility in Kansas. Two employees were directed to use a gas-powered forklift to move pallets of fireworks and cardboard out of an explosives storage facility in Pittsburg when the gas ignited, which caused an explosion and fire. OSHA cited the employer, Lone Star Management, with nine serious safety violations and proposed \$55,000 in fines.

OSHA’s Web page on the pyrotechnics industry addresses retail sales of fireworks and fireworks displays. Information on common hazards and solutions found in both areas of the industry, and downloadable safety posters for workplaces are available at <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/pyrotechnic/index.html>. It also includes a video, available at <http://www.osha.gov/video/fireworks/index.html>, which demonstrates best industry practices for retail sales and manufacturers based on National Fire Protection Association consensus standards.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA’s role is to ensure these conditions for America’s working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

June 29, 2015