

Texas Company to be Fined by OSHA

**U.S. Department of Labor
OSHA, Office of Communications
January 3, 2012**

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced that it has cited Piping Technology and Products Inc. of Houston for 13 willful and 17 serious violations of worker safety regulations at the company's Houston, Texas facility. The amount of fines sought is for a total of \$1,013,000.

OSHA alleges that the company exposed workers to the risk of amputations and other serious injuries from dangerous machinery, as well as other hazards. A worker contacted OSHA alleging a lack of brakes on overhead cranes and unguarded presses at the company's facility. This complaint triggered an investigation by OSHA.

As a result, OSHA inspectors found that employees were permitted to cut metal I-beams and pipes without the proper guards in place, which exposed them to possible injuries. Additionally, inspectors found that during routine maintenance, workers were exposed to the unexpected release of stored energy because of the improper safeguards.

Based on these findings, Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr David Michaels concluded that the company deliberately exposed its workers, who operate band saws and other dangerous machinery, to amputation hazards while misleading OSHA investigators about the use of these machines. Past citations issued in 1986, 1994, 2004 and 2005, which specifically addressed the need to guard the band saws used in production processes that the piping technology company had knowledge of OSHA requirements. In 2004 and 2005, OSHA cited the company with penalties totaling \$82,500 and \$33,000, respectively, for a variety of workplace hazards that included lockout/tagout violation.

The company has now been placed in OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

Remember, NTA is your authorized OSHA Training site.