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## OSHA Regional News Release

**U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Public Affairs**

**Region 5**

**Region 5 News Release: 11-651-CHI**

**May 16, 2011**

**Contact: Scott Allen Rhonda Burke**

**Phone: 312-353-6976 312-353-4807**

**Email: [allen.scott@dol.gov](mailto:allen.scott@dol.gov) [burke.rhonda@dol.gov](mailto:burke.rhonda@dol.gov)**

### **US Department of Labor's OSHA cites PolyChem Services in Chicago Heights, Ill., for safety and health violations after employee suffers burns**

**CHICAGO HEIGHTS, ILL.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited PolyChem Services Inc. in Chicago Heights for one safety and five health violations, including a willful health violation for failing to ensure confined spaces were safe to enter, after a worker received second- and third-degree burns at the plant in November 2010.

"Requiring workers to enter confined spaces where known hazards exist without implementing a safe entry permit program is unacceptable," said Gary Anderson, OSHA's area director in Calumet City. "Employers are responsible for knowing what hazards exist in their facilities and must take appropriate precautions by following OSHA regulations to ensure the safety and health of their workers."

The company faces proposed fines totaling \$63,000.

The willful violation, with a penalty of \$42,000, was cited after employees allegedly were required to enter a portable baker tank and a reactor vessel that had not been evaluated first for safe entry by purging, flushing and ventilating the space, and verifying the conditions were safe. In addition, safe entry permits and related employee training had not been completed. A willful violation is one committed with intentional knowing or voluntary disregard for the law's requirements, or with plain indifference to worker safety and health.

Four serious health violations, with penalties of \$16,800, include failing to assess work sites for hazards requiring personal protective equipment; failing to develop and implement a written respiratory protection program; use of electrical cables for non-authorized purposes; and failing to implement a hazardous chemical training program.

The serious safety citation, with a \$4,200 penalty, was cited for failing to provide employees with electrical safety training necessary to perform voltage testing, which exposed them to electrical shock hazards. A serious violation occurs when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

PolyChem Services Inc. has 15 business days from receipt of its citations and penalties to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA's area director or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. Employers and employees with questions regarding workplace safety and health standards can call OSHA's Calumet City Area Office at 708-891-3800. To report workplace incidents, fatalities or situations posing imminent danger to workers, call the agency's toll-free hotline at 800-321-OSHA (6742). 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 <http://www.osha.gov>.

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