Cintas Corporation Facing Massive Fine for Worker’s Death



The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) is proposing almost $2.8 million in penalties against Cintas Corp. following an investigation into a worker’s death in March 2007.

Eleazar Torres-Gomez, 46, died after he fell into an operating industrial dryer while clearing a jam of wet laundry on a conveyor that carries laundry from the washer into the dryer at a Cintas facility in Tulsa, OK. Torres- Gomez was trapped for at least 20 minutes in the dryer, which operates at temperatures approaching 300 F (149 C). He was pronounced dead at the scene.

“Plant management at the Cintas Tulsa laundry facility ignored safety and health rules that could have prevented the death of this employee,” says OSHA Administrator Edwin Foulke Jr.

Cintas is facing 42 willful, instance-byinstance citations alleging violations of OSHA’s lockout/tagout standard for failure to shut down and lock out power to equipment before clearing jams, and failure to provide lockout/tagout training to four employees responsible for clearing jams.

The company was also issued a repeat citation alleging failure to protect employees from being struck or pinned by a conveyor. Three serious citations allege failure to protect employees from falls, failure to have a qualified person inspect lockout/tagout procedures and failure to certify the procedures as required.

In a separate case, OSHA has issued five repeat and two serious citations with proposed penalties of $117,500 for violations of lockout/tagout and machine guarding standards at another Cintas facility in Columbus, OH. Other Cintas operations in Arkansas and Alabama are also under investigation by OSHA.