Lead – Protect Yourself from Lead Exposure Fatality File



Worker Died After Lead Poisoning at Scrap Metal Facility

Standing **TAMPA, FL –** Despite warnings since March 2020 of unsafe measures of lead exposure, a Tampa battery recycling facility and smelter failed to make changes that resulted in worker exposure to lead inhalation hazards, a federal workplace safety investigation found.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited Envirofocus Technologies LLC – operating as Gopher Resource LLC – with a willful violation for exposing workers to inhalation hazards. The company also failed to provide employees with adequate respirators that could have kept worker exposure to hazardous substances at or below the allowable level.

OSHA also cited Gopher Resource for:

- Allowing cadmium, lead and inorganic arsenic exposure levels above the permissible exposure limit.
- Not implementing adequate engineering and work practice controls to prevent lead and inorganic arsenic exposure levels above the permissible exposure limit.
- Failing to provide an annual update of the written compliance program for cadmium, inorganic lead and arsenic.
- Allowing workers to share aluminized jackets that were damaged and stored in the open, and exposed to lead.
- Requiring workers to wear respirators that were not fit-tested annually.
- Using shoveling, sweeping or brushing methods to remove lead accumulations.
- Not identifying all hazards on entry permits.

Proposed penalties total $319,876.

"This employer put their bottom line above the safety and well-being of their workers," said OSHA Area Director Danelle Jindra in Tampa. "Every worker has the right to a safe workplace, and they should never have to decide between their

own health and earning a living. Continuing to put workers in harm’s way is unacceptable, and OSHA will continue to hold employers like Gopher Resource responsible.”

OSHA also cited A & B Maintenance & Construction Inc., a Tampa-based company that provides supplemental maintenance at the Gopher facility, for exposing workers to health hazards by failing to maintain a written respiratory protection program and allowing lead exposure in excess of the permissible exposure limit. The company faces $16,384 in penalties.

Gopher Resource is a secondary lead smelter. It recycles automotive batteries by separating the battery components to capture lead, acid and plastic, then processes those materials.

Source: Osha.gov