



# Point

February 2025



This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes & trends regarding health and safety.

The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.



## OSHA NEWS ARTICLE

### US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR CITES PENNSYLVANIA SOAP, DETERGENT MAKER FOR FAILING TO PROTECT WORKERS BEFORE, DURING, AFTER JULY 2024 HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL RELEASE

CHAMBERSBURG, PA – A Chambersburg soap and detergent manufacturer faces \$161,310 in federal penalties after a U.S. Department of Labor investigation of a chemical gas release that sent a dozen workers to the hospital in July 2024.

The department's [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) initiated an inspection on July 11 after being notified by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and AFCO, the facility's operator, about an incident involving a release of nitrogen dioxide gas. The release occurred

when chemicals reacted during processing by AFCO employees. A manufacturing subsidiary of Zep Inc., AFCO is based in Atlanta and specializes in producing and distributing maintenance, cleaning and sanitation solutions.

OSHA inspectors determined the company had taken no action to assess the impact of the release immediately and did not swiftly evacuate workers from the building as a precaution. Inspectors discovered that workers were exposed to



nitrogen dioxide gas levels exceeding the chemical's ceiling limit, resulting in 12 employees being evaluated at a local hospital, with two of them requiring hospitalization.

Additionally, inspectors determined that the company had no emergency response plan in place, and that its respiratory protection and hazard communication programs failed to meet federal requirements. OSHA has cited AFCO for one repeat violation, and nine serious and two other-than-serious violations.

"AFCO's lack of urgency in addressing the hazardous conditions put employees at serious risk," said OSHA Area Director Kevin T. Chambers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

"Employers have a legal responsibility to identify workplace hazards and take immediate action to protect their employees from harm."

Since 2022, OSHA has cited Zep for four serious violations for its failures to protect employees at its Emerson, Georgia, facility from hazardous chemicals.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#)



## US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ARTICLE

### US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FINDS STORM PIPE CLEANING, MAINTENANCE EMPLOYER COULD HAVE PREVENTED 24-YEAR-OLD WORKER'S FATALITY AT PORT ST. LUCIE WORKSITE

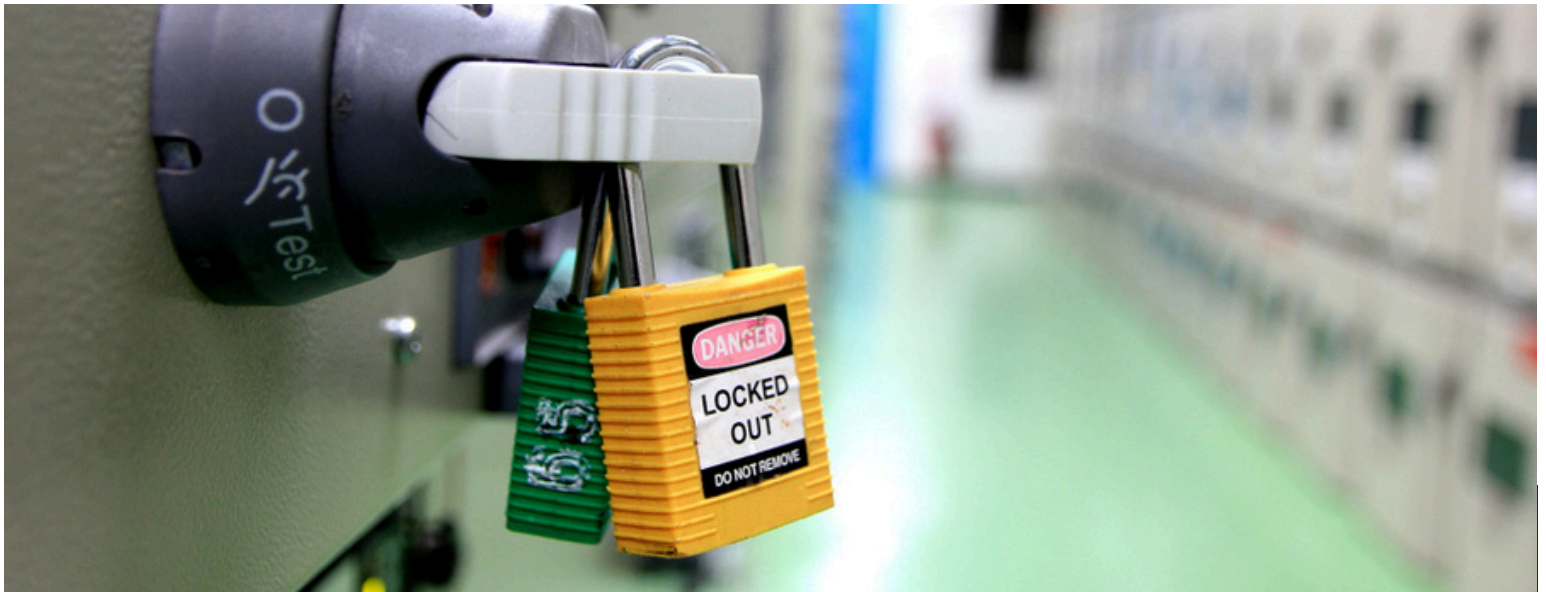
PORT ST. LUCIE, FL – A U.S. Department of Labor investigation has found that a drainpipe cleaning and maintenance company could have prevented an explosion at a Port Saint Lucie worksite in June 2024 that claimed a 24-year-old worker's life, by implementing proper safety measures to address the hazards of inflatable pipe plugs.

An investigation by the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration revealed that on June 8, 2024, two employees of Southeast Services of the Treasure Coast Inc. were cleaning a drainpipe at the intersection of Southwest Becker Road and Southwest Village Parkway. During the process, the pipe's pressurized plug became over-inflated, causing an explosion so powerful that it ejected one worker 15 feet from the storm drain, resulting in fatal injuries.

OSHA cited the Vero Beach-based employer for a serious violation for failing to develop and implement procedures and train workers on how to install and remove pneumatic pipe plugs safely.

This failure put workers at risk of being struck by dangerous equipment. "Pressurized equipment poses significant danger, and employers must put safeguards in place and take all necessary precautions to protect workers from these hazards," said OSHA Area Director Condell Eastmond in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "If employers ignore critical safety measures, the consequences can be devastating, leaving an unfillable void in the lives of the families impacted by such tragedies." OSHA has assessed the employer \$16,131 in proposed penalties. Southeast Services of the Treasure Coast Inc. is an underground utility company that specializes in the maintenance of sanitary sewer and storm water. The company employs approximately 30 workers and serves the east coast of Florida, including Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#)



## US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FINDS GE APPLIANCE MAKER WILLFULLY EXPOSED WORKERS TO MACHINE SAFETY HAZARDS, CAUSING DECATUR SUPERVISOR'S FATAL INJURIES

Haier US Appliance Solutions failed to de-energize equipment as required. DECATUR, AL – Federal workplace safety investigators found that a Decatur manufacturer of GE-brand appliances failed to follow required machine standards that could have prevented a 58-year-old front-line supervisor's fatal injuries while trying to service a door molding machine.

Inspectors with the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration opened an investigation of the July 2024 incident at Haier US Appliance Solutions Inc. and found the company allowed workers to bypass the machine's safety doors and did not use required procedures to prevent employee injuries in the carousel-like machine.

"Haier US Appliance Solutions could have avoided this tragedy but put production schedules and profit ahead of employee safety," said OSHA Area Office Director Joel Batiz in Birmingham, Alabama.

"This company's troubling history of safety failures in its manufacturing process has posed a significant risk to the more than 1,500 workers at its Decatur location who rely on a safe and healthy workplace."

OSHA cited the company, which operates as GE Appliances, for one willful violation for failing to follow lockout/tagout procedures to de-energize the machine before allowing service or maintenance. Inspectors also cited Haier for two serious violations for permitting employees to bypass interlocking safety doors to gain access to the machine and for not maintaining annual inspections for lockout/tagout procedures.

The company faces \$193,585 in proposed penalties, the maximum that OSHA can legally recommend.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#)



# HOT WORK SAFETY

## HOT WORK SAFETY

Hot work fires result in avoidable death, injury, and hundreds of millions of dollars in property loss each year. When everyone follows safe hot-work practice, these fires are preventable. The risk with hot work is high because it introduces a hazard—an ignition source. That's why the number one safety recommendation is to determine whether there is an alternative to hot work and by avoiding hot work, you minimize the risk.

### What is Hot Work?

- Work involving burning, welding, or a similar operation that is capable of initiating fires or explosions.
- Activity involving flame, spark production, or heat.
- Welding, open-flame soldering, brazing, thermal spraying, oxygen cutting, and arc cutting.

### Hot Work Hazards

Hot work has the potential to unite all three parts of the fire triangle: oxygen, fuel and an ignition source.

**Oxygen** is present in the ambient air. Unsafe practices involving pure oxygen can cause oxygen enrichment (over 22 percent by volume) in the workplace.

**Fuel** includes anything that can be ignited. Examples of common fuels include the following:

- Construction materials such as wood, plastic, insulation, roofing materials, including those in concealed spaces
- Flammable and combustible liquids or gases such as fuel, paint, cleaning solvents
- Simple combustibles such as rags, paper, cardboard, lumber, furnishings

**Ignition** sources can be as simple as the hot work itself.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



If you are a **code official**, you must know and enforce the requirements of NFPA 51B.



If you are a **building owner** or **facility manager**, you must have a procedure in place for documenting hot work hazards and for advising all contractors about site-specific potential fire hazards. You also need to know any jurisdiction-specific regulations you need to comply with.



If you are a **contractor** or **someone working on a job site**, you should know the specific combustible hazards within a client property, where manual fire-fighting tools are located, and where hot work is not allowed.

Ignition results when any heat source sufficient to ignite a fuel does so. It can occur through the direct or indirect application of heat. *Direct* application of heat includes: welding, cutting and burning. *Indirect* application includes heat conducted through metal surfaces to fuel sources on the other side (e.g., through to the other side of a bulkhead) and sparks traveling to a distant fuel source (e.g., to a pool of liquid or other combustible material).

### Ways to Minimize Hot Work Hazards

Use “Recognize, Evaluate, and Control” Process

This process is covered in NFPA 51B and focuses on the following:

- **Recognize** – Determine if fire risks exist before hot work is started.
- **Evaluate** – Determine if hazards are present, especially hazards that could fuel a fire (flammable and combustible liquids, gases and simple combustibles).

- **Control** – Take appropriate steps to eliminate or minimize the hazards.

### Did You Know?

**NFPA 51B** is required by reference, and therefore, compliance is not optional. OSHA references NFPA 51B, *Standard for Fire Prevention During Welding, Cutting, and Other Hot Work*, in 29 CFR 1910 Subpart Q, and NFPA 1, *Fired Code*, requires compliance with NFPA 51B in Chapter 41.

Fires can start after the hot work is complete. The fire watch must remain on site for a minimum of 60 minutes to monitor for smoldering fires, per NFPA 51B. The permit authorizing individual could require the fire watch to remain on site longer depending on the conditions of the work site.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL HOT WORK FACT SHEET](#)



## WORKER INJURED CHARLOTTE GARDENS, BRONX CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT

BRONX, NEW YORK (January 27, 2025) – A construction worker was seriously injured after falling 30 feet at a three-story family building in Charlotte Gardens, Bronx.

New York City officials are saying that the accident took place around 9:14 AM on Monday. A construction worker was performing tasks at the building under permit for renovations.

At some point during his work, he fell 30 feet from a roof into a rear yard. Paramedics were called to the building in Charlotte Gardens in order to help the victim.

He was taken to Saint Barnabas Hospital with serious injuries. A full investigation into the accident remains ongoing at this time.

### Liability for New York City Construction Accidents

Workplace falls remain one of the leading causes of serious injury and death for workers. According to **Cureus**, “Falls from roofs (FFRs) present a significant danger, especially in the construction sector, accounting for a third of all fatalities from falls. Alarmingly, about 40% of construction deaths are attributed to FFRs. In the year 2020, there were 108 fatalities among roofing contractors, highlighting the occupational risks.” There are a number of common causes of workplace falls.

- A building may have unprotected edges or openings.
- Ladders at a construction site may have been used improperly.
- Work sites may have slick surfaces that contribute to falls.
- Workers may not be given personal fall arrest systems.



Building owners and general contractors could face liability for any accident where workers are injured in a fall. These entities could be held strictly liable through New York's "Scaffold Law." In general, construction companies are liable for all gravity-related accidents. This includes instances where a worker falls or is hit by a falling object. It is important that certain steps are taken after any workplace accident.

- Medical records related to the incident should be collected.
- Surveillance footage should be sought.
- An investigation by OSHA should be conducted.
- An experienced construction accident attorney should be contacted.

Falls from roofs are often highly preventable. They tend to happen at construction sites where workers are not being given adequate safety equipment.

Among other things, workers should be provided with personal fall arrest systems when they are working at locations that are above 6 feet off the ground. Any person who is injured in a construction accident may be able to seek some measure of justice through a civil claim.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL ARTICLE](#)

# Raising The Standard



## **Want to prevent workplace accidents?**

RTS Consulting works with clients to develop a custom corporate safety, health and environmental program or site specific accident prevention program (in accordance with the Corps of Engineers EM 385-1-1 or OSHA/HIOSH requirements) based on sound principles of risk management. We also proactively manage the claims process to ensure that claimants receive proper care, while serving as an advocate and advisor to settle claims with our clients' best interest in mind.

## **Need Lockout/Tagout Training?**

Raising The Standard Consulting offers a 4-hour Lockout/Tagout Training.

**For more information please contact  
Steve Rozema at  
srozema@rtsconsulting.com**

**[CLICK HERE FOR OUR TRAINING SERVICES](#)**



Raising the Standard Consulting will raise the standard of EH&S in your organization through the development of new and innovative strategies and programs driven by your own individual needs.

We want to build relationships with our clients to help create lasting change in their organizations. Contact us today to build a safer tomorrow.

With Aloha,

Stanford Brown, B.Sc., CSP, CSHP, CRSP, CHSC, Senior  
Consultant, President & CEO