Lead Paint Dangers and Safety Fatality Report

A maintenance worker at Republic Steel, an automotive steel manufacturer, suffered severe injuries because the company failed to guard machines and provide lock-out devices, an OSHA investigation found.

The Canton, Ohio-based manufacturer faces $279,578 in proposed penalties after the agency's investigators found workers at its plant were exposed to machine hazards and lead.

"Companies must continuously monitor their facilities to ensure health and safety procedures are adequate and effective in protecting workers from injuries and illness on the job," said Dorothy Dougherty, deputy assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health in a statement.

On Dec. 5, 2016, a 64-year-old maintenance worker suffered a fractured pelvis after being struck by a sail – a large clamp that holds the steel billet – because lock-out devices were not affixed to the machine's operating parts to stop movement during maintenance, OSHA investigators found.

Days later, OSHA opened a second investigation after a complaint alleged worker were being exposed to lead. Agency investigators documented seven incidents of lead overexposure in the caster facility.

In total, the agency found two repeated and five serious safety and health violations during the two inspections. Among them, the company failed to:

- implement engineering controls to lower exposure to steel dust particulates,
- prohibit employees from eating in areas where lead exposure was possible,
- affix locking devices to machine operating parts during maintenance and

- replace damaged guard and stair rails.

In the past decade, Republic Steel has been cited for more than 250 safety and health violations at its facilities across the country.