

Plant Manager Jailed for Six Years for Safety Cover-ups

The former manager of Atlantic States Cast Iron Pipe Co. in Phillipsburg, NJ, has been sentenced to 70 months' imprisonment for covering up workplace incidents, including a death, and for violating environmental laws.

John Prisque, 59, of Bethlehem, NJ, had been seeking house arrest in order to take care of his sick wife and daughter, but the court rejected that request. He was convicted of charges that included misleading safety investigators and putting workers' safety at risk in order to boost pipe production.

Cover-ups for which he was convicted included installing a steel wire safety shield following a serious injury incident and telling an OSHA inspector that nothing had been changed since the incident, and repairing the brakes on a forklift following a fatality in an effort to cover-up a mechanical problem.

In another incident, a report suggested that a worker had suffered a partial finger amputation at home, although the incident occurred at work. And after another worker lost three fingers in a machine whose safety device had been disabled, Prisque told an OSHA inspector that the machine had been delivered without such a device.

The environmental charges against Prisque involved violating the Clean Water Act by dumping oil-contaminated water into the Delaware River and burning waste asphalt-based paint in a furnace.