

News Release



U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Seattle, Wash.
Release Number: 08-1138-SEA

For Immediate Release
Aug. 7, 2008
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MSHA fines Alaska Mechanical Inc. \$115,000

Contractor cited for inadequate training, unsafe use of equipment in double fatality

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has assessed \$115,000 in fines against Alaska Mechanical Inc., a contractor at Alaska Gold Co.’s Nome Operations Mine, for safety violations contributing to the death of two miners in July 2007. The contract miners suffered fatal blunt force trauma injuries when a manlift they were operating became unstable and toppled on its side. At the time of the accident, the mill was under construction and open pit mining had not yet begun.

“This tragic accident occurred because management policies and procedures were inadequate,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “Mine management has the responsibility to train all employees before assigning them to operate machinery with which they are unfamiliar.”

The two victims had been assigned to install roofing bolts to secure the metal roof of the mill building under construction. While one worked on the top portion of the roof, the other operated a manlift and installed bolts along the roof’s edges. Toward the end of their work shift, the men were preparing to be transported to the ground from the lift when it became unsteady. The basket hit the side of the mill building below the roof line, and the boom, which had been extended about 90 feet above ground, toppled over.

MSHA’s investigation of the accident concluded that the manlift had not been positioned on solid, level ground and the center hydraulic lift cylinder was not intended for load-bearing support while raising or extending the boom. Furthermore, training for the manlift operator was incomplete and did not address the load management system provided on the unit.

MSHA has issued the contractor a regular moderate negligence citation and a high negligence unwarrantable failure citation. The violations were assessed at \$55,000 and \$60,000, respectively.

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