

Illinois Central Railroad Faces Fines of \$110,500 for Lead Exposure

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Illinois Central Railroad Co. has been cited by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration for one willful and six serious safety violations for exposing workers to lead hazards. Proposed penalties total \$110,500.

OSHA began its inspection May 29 after it observed workers without the necessary safety and health protection while conducting demolition operations on a bridge that was coated with lead-based paint. The bridge spanned South Lock Street near Archer Avenue in Chicago.

Illinois Central Railroad Co. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Canadian National Railway, headquartered in Montreal. Illinois Central Railroad provides rail service throughout Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota and Canada.

The one willful violation was cited for failing to conduct initial monitoring of employees for lead exposure.

A willful violation is one committed with intentional, knowing or voluntary disregard for the law's requirements, or plain indifference to employee safety and health.

Additionally, six serious violations were cited for failing to provide appropriate respiratory protection and protective clothing; not providing changing areas and storage for street clothes to prevent lead contamination and the transfer of lead from the job site to home; lack of hand-washing stations; and allowing consumption of food and drink in work areas where lead may be present.

The company was also cited for failing to utilize engineering controls, including water misting, long-handled torches and ventilation systems to reduce employees' exposure to lead.

A serious violation occurs when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

Illinois Central Railroad has 15 business days from receipt of its citations and penalties to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA's area director, or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.