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# Tragic Collapse at Boise Airport: Big D Builders' Neglect Leads to Fatalities and Injuries

## Description

In January 2024, a catastrophic event occurred near Boise Airport, resulting in the collapse of an airport hangar. This tragic incident led to the death of three workers and injuries to at least eight others. The subsequent investigation revealed a shocking disregard for safety standards by the building contractor, Big D Builders Inc., based in Meridian.

Inspectors from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) were dispatched to the scene immediately following the incident. Their findings were alarming. Big D Builders had initiated the construction of the hangar without employing necessary bracing or tensioned guy wires. Numerous warning signs of structural instability were ignored, such as visibly curved and bent I-beams, unbalanced columns, and snapped wire rope cables.

Despite these clear indicators of danger, the company continued to expand the hangar by adding 150-foot-long bays. These bays were noticeably misaligned, and critical connecting bolts were left loose. Instead of adhering to steel erection industry standards by installing additional bracing or temporary guy lines, the contractor used straps to straighten the spans, further compromising the structure.

"Big D Builders' blatant disregard for federal safety regulations cost three workers their lives and caused at least eight others to suffer painful injuries," stated OSHA Area Director David Kearns in Boise. "The company's irresponsible construction methods left the aircraft hangar's structure extremely vulnerable."

Moreover, the investigation uncovered that Big D Builders failed to adequately train their workers on proper steel span construction techniques. The company also permitted cranes and other construction equipment to operate in hazardous conditions, such as mud and standing water, increasing the risk of equipment overturning.

"The tragic loss and pain suffered by so many is compounded by the fact that Big D Builders could have prevented all of this from happening," Kearns added. "We cannot put a value on the loss of life, but we will use all our resources to hold employers accountable when they willfully ignore safety regulations and expose workers to serious and fatal injuries. We encourage other employers to remember the risks of ignoring federal OSHA and industry safety standards."

As a result of their findings, OSHA cited Big D Builders for one willful violation and three serious violations of federal safety regulations, proposing \$198,586 in penalties. Inland Crane Inc. of Boise was also cited with one serious safety violation, facing \$10,163 in penalties for failing to ensure stability during the hangar erection process.

Big D Builders Inc. is a design-build contractor headquartered in Meridian, offering services such as site evaluation, architectural and engineering consulting, drafting, and project management across several states, including Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

The significance of this incident is underscored by statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which reported that 1,056 construction workers died on the job in 2022. These numbers highlight the critical importance of adhering to safety regulations in the construction industry.

The companies involved have 15 business days from the receipt of the 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.

## CATEGORY

1. Idaho
2. United States

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2. Bureau of Labor Statistics
3. Craig Durrant
4. David Kearns (OSHA)
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