
Department of Labor Finds Southeast Oklahoma Contractor's History of Safety Violations Contributed to Fatal Trench Collapse Near Shawnee

Description

An Edmond contractor with a long-standing history of workplace safety violations dating back to 2018, including three violations specifically related to the dangers of underground trenches, has once again found itself in violation of U.S. Department of Labor regulations.

In February 2024, investigators from the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) discovered that a 61-year-old pipe layer employed by Jerlow Construction Co. had suffered fatal injuries. The incident occurred when a 9-foot deep trench collapsed at a residential work site near Shawnee. The investigation revealed that the employer had allowed employees to work in the excavation without the necessary protective measures. These measures include shielding, benching, sloping, or other safety devices. The fatal accident happened while employees were installing an 8-inch water line below the surface.

"No one should ever be allowed to enter or work in an excavation without the required protective systems in place and without a proper inspection of the trench by a qualified person," explained OSHA Area Director Steven Kirby in Oklahoma City. "Despite numerous warnings and notices of violations for failing to protect employees in trenches, Jerlow Construction has joined the all-too-long list of employers whose defiance of federal regulations resulted in a preventable loss of life. Their failures are inexcusable."

Following the investigation, OSHA issued citations to Jerlow Construction for one repeat violation and three serious violations. These infractions included failing to provide adequate systems to prevent trench cave-ins, neglecting to train employees on recognizing excavation hazards, and failing to perform daily inspections to ensure safe entry conditions for the trench. The company now faces \$85,173 in proposed penalties, an amount determined by federal statute.

Founded in 1973, Jerlow Construction Co. is a licensed underground utility construction company. They specialize in installing and servicing sanitary and storm sewers and water mains for both residential developments and commercial projects.

Jerlow Construction Co. has 15 business days from the 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.

CATEGORY

1. Oklahoma
2. United States

POST TAG

1. Jerlow Construction Co.

-
2. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
 3. Steven Kirby (OSHA)

Category

1. Oklahoma
2. United States

Tags

1. Jerlow Construction Co.
2. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
3. Steven Kirby (OSHA)

Date

20/09/2024

Date Created

11/08/2024