Processing Plant Hazards: From Pinch Points to Chemical Burns Fatality File

Employee’s feet are burned when caustic chemical is spilled

At about 3:30 p.m. on January 2, 2020, an employee was working as a chemical technician for a firm that manufactured miscellaneous food. The firm manufactured nutritional dry food. The employee was working at a fixed facility that comprised a manufacturing and an office area. He was a fulltime regular employee of the employer. He was pumping a caustic soda (HTST caustic, sodium hydroxide, CAS number 1310-73-2, 40 to 50 percent, pH 12 to 14) into a bucket from a drum. For some reason, the pump hose came out of the container. The chemical splashed into the employee’s rubber boots and got onto both of his feet. Right after the incident, he went for lunch. He felt some irritation on his feet and told this to his lead man, who told the employee to go home. He went home, took a shower, and cleaned his feet. Nonetheless, he felt a burning sensation and tingling on his feet. He went to the emergency room at a regional medical center, where he was admitted and treated. He was hospitalized. He was released at 4:00 a.m. the next day. A doctor advised him to see a burn specialist. After one week, the employee went to a burn center. He was told that he needed skin grafts on both feet. On January 17, 2020, skin grafts were performed on his feet. He had suffered causing third degree chemical burns on both feet. Appropriate foot protection could have prevented his feet from being burned. The employer’s HSE coordinator reported the injury to the Division’s district office at 4:45 p.m. on January 30, 2020. The employer did not meet the Division’s reporting requirements. A serious accident-related violation was cited, T8CCR 3385(a) inappropriate foot protection.

Source: https://www.osha.gov