

## OSHA CITES KOSWIRE FOR WILLFUL VIOLATION RESULTING IN WORKER FATALITY: LEVIES FINE OF \$145,530



The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, has fined Koswire Inc. \$145,530 holding it responsible for the death of a worker, alleging that lax safety standards were the cause of the fatality. The worker was caught in moving wire and dragged into the revolving rolls of a machine at the company's facility in Flowery Branch, Ga. OSHA has found Koswire Inc. guilty of 19 safety and health violations, including one willful that resulted in the employee's death. A willful infringement is one committed even whilst being aware of the serious consequences or deliberate flouting of the law's requirements, or adopting a carefree, uncaring attitude to worker safety and health. The Korea-based company draws steel wire, which is used in the making of a variety of products, especially pens and spray cans. Following its inspections that began on March 3, OSHA concluded in its findings that flouting of safety regulations included failure to inspect slings and thereby not removing or changing damaged and worn out slings. Moreover, the company did not ensure that employees, whilst handling corrosive chemicals, covered their eyes with goggles that would prevent chemicals accidentally getting into the eyes. Worse still, drums and tanks containing hazardous and acidic materials were not labeled properly, rendering employees handling them oblivious to the dangers of handling such material. OSHA says that the accident was avertable and that a young life was needlessly snuffed out – the victim Adam Wingo was 30 years old. Bill Fulcher, director of OSHA's Atlanta-East Area Office said, "This incident was preventable. Employers cannot allow employees to be exposed to unguarded equipment or other workplace hazards. It is imperative that management find and eliminate hazards before another worker is killed or injured." Apart from the penalty Koswire has also been put on the OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program. Under this program OSHA conducts follow-up inspections to sure that company is complying with the law. Companies found guilty of violating safety rules, even after being put on the Severe Violator Enforcement Program, would face financial penalties and censure many times higher than what similar infringements would attract prior to being put into the program. The other serious safety and health violations that were levied against the company included not providing training to employees that would help them identify and recognize hazardous energy sources. There was no emergency eyewash station at the degreasing tank. Furthermore, OSHA claimed that workers were not adequately protected from fall hazards. Koswire has not installed equipment guarding on pulleys or horizontal and vertical belts. Other relatively not so serious safety and health violations that the company was charged with was failing to have a monthly assessment for crane hooks, not providing covers on junction boxes and appropriately educating and providing a written respiratory protection program for workers who worked in those areas of the company that could expose them to hazardous chemicals. According to a release from OSHA, Koswire has 15 business days to comply with OSHA's decisions or contest the citations and penalties before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.