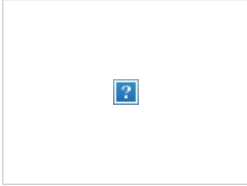


## WHISTLEBLOWER VIOLATIONS COST GEORGIA-BASED COMPANY \$190,000



A Georgia-based company has been ordered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to immediately reinstate and pay over 190,000 dollars to a terminated truck driver in Sauk Village, IL. The driver, who worked for Interline Logistics Group LLC, made a report concerning safety with regard to his truck's brakes. He was told to have the brakes serviced at a repair shop and, following the repair, was instructed to travel to his dispatch location to retrieve a return load. The driver refused, stating that he had exceeded the allowable work hours as regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The next day, the driver was fired for not following the dispatch instructions. The employee then filed a whistleblower complaint with the OSHA, claiming that the genuine reason for his termination was bringing the faulty brakes to the company's attention. The OSHA investigated the case and determined that there was "reasonable cause" to believe that the disciplinary actions and firing were not a disregard for company policy but due to the employee reporting a safety concern and trying to avoid a violation of DOT regulations.



The payment to the driver includes back wages, compensatory damages, attorney fees and punitive damages. In addition to the employee's reinstatement, the company is required to refrain from any potential retaliation against the employee for exercising his rights as protected by the whistleblower provision of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA). Interline Logistics Group is headquartered in Kennesaw, GA, and has nationwide operations. An appeal may be filed by either party with the DOL's Office of Administrative Law Judges, although the appeal will not immediately affect the reinstatement order for the driver. Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for the OSHA, stated in a press release that the "case sends a clear message that employers are simply not allowed to retaliate against workers for reporting work-related safety concerns or against drivers who refuse to violate DOT regulations that determine how many hours they are allowed to work and how much rest they receive." Michaels further noted, "The safety of all workers and everyone on the road is endangered when employees are afraid to report safety concerns because of threats from their employers." The OSHA enforces the STAA's whistleblower provision, as well as provisions of 20 additional statutes protecting employees who report violations of securities, airline, nuclear, pipeline, environmental, public transportation, workplace, consumer product, and health care and financial reform law. Accordingly, employers are prohibited from retaliation against employees who voice concerns or offer protected information to the employer or the government. The OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Program investigates cases of employees who believe that they have been retaliated against for conduct protected by law. Employers must provide safe and healthful workplaces for their workers as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.