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OSHA News Release

2004 - 03/24/2004 - Milwaukee Company Penalized \$193,500 for Failing to Protect Workers from Electrical Hazards

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OSHA Regional News Release

U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs

Region 5

Region 5 News Release 04-479-CHI
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Contact: Brad Mitchell
Phone: (312) 353-6976

Milwaukee Company Penalized \$193,500 for Failing to Protect Workers from Electrical Hazards

MILWAUKEE, Wis. -- The U.S. Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued citations and proposed penalties to Pieper Electric, Inc., of Milwaukee, Wis., for failing to protect workers from electrical hazards.

"To ensure that injury and illness rates continue to decline, we must make sure that employers protect employees from workplace hazards," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao. "The significant penalty of \$193,500 in this case demonstrates this Administration's commitment to protecting the health and safety of American workers."

The penalty and OSHA citations are based on an inspection initiated in September 2003 following an incident at a Racine, Wis., wastewater treatment facility where Pieper Electric was contracted to furnish and install various electrical equipment. On September 23, three Pieper employees were severely burned by an arc flash and explosion that occurred while they were testing an electrical switchgear unit. OSHA cited the firm for a serious violation of federal training requirements and willful violations of lack of personal protective gear and for failing to de-energize or effectively guard exposed live equipment parts.

Pieper Electric, Inc., employs approximately 430 workers nationwide and had 16 workers on the Racine project at the time of the accident. The company has been inspected 63 times at various job sites since 1972 and has been issued a total of 13 serious and 40 other violations.

The company has 15 working days from receipt of the citations to appeal before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

In fiscal year 2003, OSHA conducted almost 40,000 inspections, an increase of more than 2000 inspections over 2002 levels; more than half focused on high-hazard industries. For more information, visit www.osha.gov. The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is dedicated to saving lives, preventing injuries and illnesses and

protecting the health and safety of America's workers.

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200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210