



NEWS RELEASE

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COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OF VOSH CASES REACHED FOLLOWING FATAL ACCIDENTS AT GOODYEAR'S DANVILLE PLANT

RICHMOND, VA – The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry's Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program announced today a joint comprehensive settlement agreement with The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company (Goodyear) and the United Steelworkers (USW) with respect to the Department's investigations of four fatal accidents that occurred at Goodyear's Danville Plant over a one-year period.

The agreement provides for a total of \$1.75 million in penalties, \$1 million of which will be paid by Goodyear to the Commonwealth. The agreement lays out an orderly process for the elimination of the numerous workplace hazards identified during the eleven VOSH inspections conducted over the last eighteen months.

The agreement also includes a substantial commitment from all parties to assist the Goodyear Danville Plant towards achieving its goal of becoming a national leader in occupational safety and health by successfully completing the application process for membership in the Virginia Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). Goodyear will be able to retain up to \$750,000 in penalties for use at the Danville Plant to abate hazards identified during the VOSH inspections and to assist the Danville Plant in its efforts to meet the challenging requirements of the Virginia VPP to make its safety and health management systems among the best in the United States.

"We were all deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life at the Goodyear Danville Plant and for the families and co-workers involved. I can think of no better tribute to those who lost their lives and those who continue to work at the plant than to take the combined resources and efforts of the Department, Goodyear and the United Steelworkers to turn the Goodyear Danville Plant into one of the safest and healthiest places to work in the country", said Commissioner C. Ray Davenport.

“Goodyear is committed to working in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United Steelworkers to continually identify hazards and improve the safety of our Danville plant, with the goal of acceptance in the Commonwealth’s Voluntary Protection Program,” said Greg Kerr, plant manager, Goodyear Danville. “On a personal note, having been recently named Danville’s plant manager, I want to assure the Danville community and all my coworkers that nothing is more important to me or Goodyear than the safety of our associates.”

“The USW continues to mourn for our fallen sister and brothers, but we also recognize that health & safety conditions at the Danville plant have improved and will continue to do so. Much of the improvement is a direct result of the involvement of the union working with Goodyear and VOSH during the investigations and during the settlement process.” - Thomas M. Conway, International Vice President (Administration), United Steelworkers (USW)

“USW Local Union 831L is pleased that this process has concluded with a very positive settlement agreement that will benefit all of us working at the Danville Goodyear plant now and in the future. While nothing will replace our sister and brothers who were fatally injured, the elements of the settlement agreement between VOSH and Goodyear will greatly improve safety at the Danville plant.” - Danny Barber, President, USW Local Union 831L

Commissioner Davenport further noted that “It is anticipated that the VPP application process may take as long as five years and represents a significant commitment by Goodyear to the Commonwealth. The agreement also provides that Goodyear will host in the Danville metropolitan area three important VPP Best Practices Day training sessions for hundreds of employers from around the state during 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Goodyear’s Danville facility covers 56 acres and employs approximately 2,200 workers. The plant manufactures aviation and specialty tires, and operates on three shifts. Employees at the plant are represented by Local 831 of the United Steelworkers.

Over the course of the last eighteen months, the VOSH Program conducted four fatal accident investigations, two non-fatal accident investigations, three employee complaint inspections and comprehensive safety and comprehensive health “wall-to-wall” inspections.

The comprehensive settlement entered into by the parties today resolves all of the open VOSH cases and investigations conducted by the Department at the Danville Plant during this period. The settlement terms are contained in a pre-citation agreement which resolves the four current open cases, as well as a post-contest settlement agreement which, when signed, will resolve the six outstanding contested cases. The parties are submitting both agreements to the Danville Circuit Court for entry of an agreed order. The full terms of the comprehensive settlement will be available upon entry of the agreed order by the Danville Circuit Court.

A copy of the pre-citation settlement agreement can be found at:

http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/goodyear_2016.html

For more information on the best practices for preventing fatalities, injuries and illnesses:

http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/fatalities_intro.html

Copies of the citations issued in the Goodyear cases can be found at:

http://www.doli.virginia.gov/vosh_enforcement/goodyear_2016.html

A Media Packet for the VOSH Program can be found at:

http://www.doli.virginia.gov/media_room/vosh_media_packet_files/VOSH%20Media%20Packet_FINAL_08.03.2016.pdf

More information about Virginia's VPP and other VOSH Cooperative Programs:

Successful applicants to Virginia VPP receive the designation of VPP STAR status. As part of the recognition for achieving STAR status, the worksite is entitled to fly the VPP "STAR Worksite" flag. The process for reaching STAR status is extensive to ensure that only the very best programs qualify. Since the inception of Virginia's VPP in 1996, only 68 STAR/MERIT worksites have been recognized, and only 44 Virginia companies currently retain the STAR/MERIT designation.

In Virginia VPP, a cooperative relationship is formed between the VOSH program, the employer, and employees, which include the agreement of company leaders to operate exceptional safety and health management systems that meet a rigorous set of occupational safety and health criteria. Employers agree to voluntarily participate in the program and to directly involve employees in all aspects of the company's safety and health management systems.

Requirements include an extensive application process, submission of written safety and health policies and procedures, demonstration of successful implementation of those programs through injury and illness rates that are below the national average for the employer's industry, and an intensive weeklong inspection by a team of VPP experts.

Businesses that participate in VPP substantially improve safety and health protections for thousands of Virginia employees through cooperative efforts to reduce injuries, illnesses, and fatal accidents. VPP STAR sites regularly report decreased bottom line costs associated with dramatically reduced injury and illness rates (an average of over 60% below the respective industry average), and improved productivity and employee morale. Reducing private sector employer costs associated with injuries, illnesses, and fatal accidents enhances a company's economic viability and competitiveness, and increases available capital for reinvestment, expansion, and new hiring.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry offers two voluntary protection recognition programs, the [Virginia Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VPP) generally for larger employers and the [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program](#) (SHARP) for businesses of 250 employees or fewer. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or for VPP - contact Milford Stern, VPP Program Manager at (540) 562-3580, ext. 123 or Milford.Stern@doli.virginia.gov; and for SHARP – contact Dennis Edwards, VOSH Consultation Program Manager, at (804) 371-3104 or Dennis.Edwards@doli.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry also offers [On-Site Consultation Services](#) to help employers better understand and voluntarily comply with VOSH standards. Priority is given to high hazard workplaces with 250 or fewer employees and all services are offered to employers at no cost. On-Site Consultation Services helps employers identify and correct potential safety and health hazards through walk-through surveys (without citations or penalties), provide abatement advice, provide on-site training, and provide program assistance to develop safety and health programs. Additional information about On-Site Consultation Services can be obtained by contacting the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry office closest to you at www.doli.virginia.gov or by contacting Dennis Edwards, VOSH Consultation Program Manager, at (804) 371-3104 or Dennis.Edwards@doli.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program is financed with 50% state funds and 50% federal funds in the form of a grant from the U. S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), under §23(g) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

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