

OSHA cites IPM Foods for 18 work violations

By KEVIN MURPHY for the Daily News | Posted: Wednesday, March 9, 2016 4:00 pm

MADISON — A Beloit food processor, IPM Foods, has been cited by OSHA for 18 violations of workplace safety and employee training regulations and assessed potential penalties of \$103,600 for conditions its Harvey Street plant.

IPM is contesting the violations and was meeting Tuesday with OSHA before an administrative law judge in Madison in an attempt to settle the matter, according to an OSHA spokesperson.

OSHA issued the violations and assessed the potential fines in October following a May 15 complaint inspection when the company allegedly allowed employees to work on live electrical circuits by failing to use locking devices while machines were being maintained.

“Workers risked injury each time they serviced this equipment,” Ann Grevenkamp, OSHA’s area director in Madison said in a prepared statement in November. “Each year hundreds of workers are injured on the job because employers like IPMF fail to train them about hazards in the workplace. The company must evaluate its health and safety program to ensure workers are protected on the job.”

OSHA also found the company allegedly failed to:

- Evaluate elevator pits, kettles, retorts and liquefiers for confined space hazards and implement appropriate safety programs;
- Train employees in machine safety procedures;
- Train and evaluate industrial truck operators;
- Provide electrical protective equipment;
- Train workers about chemical handling;
- Record injury and illness data.

OSHA termed two of the violations as “Willful,” its third highest classification; 15 as “Serious” and one as “Other than Serious.”

The agency gave the company until December to correct the last of the violations.

OSHA regulations allowed contested penalties to be reduced by up to 25 percent if the employer makes a “good faith” effort to correct them and by 10 percent if the employer has had no prior citations

Penalties can be increased if they are considered “Willful”, for repeat violations and vary depending on the number of employees, according to OSHA regulations.

Efforts were unsuccessful Tuesday to reach IPM for comment on the case.

Privately held IMP Foods was formed in 2007 as a contract specialty food manufacturer. It is owned by IMPF, LLC.

The company announced in December that it would be vacating its Beloit facility and moving production, packaging and warehousing operations mid-year to a building currently under construction in Janesville.

The move would relocate 90 employees to a larger facility with room for future expansion.