

Case 418. 49-year-old racetrack safety crewmember died when he was struck by a racecar while on the track directing traffic under “caution” conditions.

49-year-old racetrack safety crewmember died when he was struck by a racecar while on the track directing traffic under “caution” conditions. During the race, a racecar had dropped oil or some other fluid on the track and the Caution was issued (via radio communication to all track personnel, racecar drivers and Safety Crew); also Caution lights (yellow flashing lights) at the entrance of Turns 1 and 3 were lit. When a caution is issued, all racecars are required to line up single file and travel approximately 25 mph around the track until the caution is over. The Track Clean Up crew, wearing the required firefighter turnout gear and radio communication, left their station behind the concrete wall near the exit of Turn 2 and drove to the area of the racetrack where the oil/fluid was located to lay down oil-dry and move the disabled racecar off the track. While laying down the oil-dry, the Clean Up crew heard through radio communication that the decedent had been struck. The decedent, who was wearing the required firefighter turnout gear and radio communication, left the station near Turn 2 but did not communicate his intentions to the other safety crewmembers. He stood on the outer/elevated portion of the track to directing the racecars to form the single file line and drive along the inner lanes of the track. A witness indicated as the racecars came out of Turn 2, one of the cars came out of the single file. The driver unsuccessfully attempted to avoid striking the decedent. The decedent unsuccessfully attempted to get out of the way. He was struck and the propelled him 20-25 feet. He came to rest on the inner lanes of the track. The decedent did not have protection from a Safety Vehicle to serve as a barrier between him and the on-coming cars on the track. The race was stopped and all track crewmembers responded to the area. Emergency responders on site treated the decedent, who was flown to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead in the emergency room.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety Division issued the following Serious citations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

SERIOUS: MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT, ACT 154, 408.1011(a): An employer shall furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee.

In that employees are exposed to the hazard of being struck by moving race cars while performing tasks on the track during races. Safety Crewmember was struck by a race car while on the track directing traffic in the Exit of Turn #2 during a race under caution without any protection by Safety Vehicle.

Among others, one feasible and acceptable method to correct this violation is to develop written Standard Operating Procedures for On-Track Safety Crew, including specific Job Functions and Duties, assigned Responsibilities, Personal Protective Equipment and

Employee Training; ensure no member of the Safety Crew is on the race track without the protection of the Safety Vehicle during race and/or caution laps.

SERIOUS: MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT, ACT 154, 408.1061(1): An employer shall make, keep, and preserve accurate and timely records and reports of work illnesses and injuries and report the information to the appropriate department in a form and in accordance with rules promulgated by the departments under authority of this act for the purpose of developing information regarding the causes and prevention of occupational illnesses and injuries. The employer shall notify the Department of Consumer and Industry Services within 8 hours of a fatality or any hospitalization of 3 or more employees suffering injury from the same accident or illness from exposure to the same health hazard associated with their employment.

The employer did not report the fatality to the Department with the required 8-hour time period.