

06-16

For Immediate Release
February 3, 2006

ALGOMA STEEL INC. FINED \$313,000 FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATION

SAULT STE. MARIE, Ont. – Algoma Steel Inc., a steel manufacturer based in Sault Ste. Marie, was fined \$313,000 on February 2, 2006 for a violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act that resulted in the death of an employee.

On April 26, 2004, an electrical worker was attempting to visually trace some wire that ran along a ceiling when the worker walked over an opening to an “alloy addition chute” (a large funnel-shaped hole used to introduce additives during the steel-making process) in the floor and fell about 10.7 metres (35 feet) into a pit below. The worker died as a result of injuries sustained in the fall. The incident occurred at the company’s # 2 Basic Oxygen Steelmaking Plant at 105 West Street in Sault Ste. Marie.

A Ministry of Labour investigation found the chute opening was protected on three sides. There was a guardrail on one side, a fixed piece of equipment on a second side and a wall on a third side. At the time of the incident a guardrail was also installed on a fourth side, but the gate had been left in an open position. The gate had been installed about 20 years earlier as a safety precaution after another worker fell part way into the chute and was injured, but over time proper use of the gate became inconsistent. Although the gate was sometimes kept closed, it was left open for periods of time.

Algoma Steel Inc. pleaded guilty, as an employer, to failing to ensure there was a guardrail around the perimeter of the chute opening, as required by Section 13(1)(a) of the Regulations for Industrial Establishments. This was contrary to Section 25(1)(c) of the act.

The fine was imposed by Justice E. Kristine Bignell of the Ontario Court of Justice in Sault Ste. Marie. In addition, the court imposed a 25-per-cent victim fine surcharge, as required by the Provincial Offences Act. The surcharge is credited to a special provincial government fund to assist victims of crime.

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Court Information at a Glance

Location: Ontario Court of Justice
426 Queen Street East, Courtroom 9
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

Judge: Justice E. Kristine Bignell

Date / Time: February 2, 2006, 10 a.m.

Defendants: Algoma Steel Inc.

Matter: Occupational Health & Safety

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