

OSHA has cited HomeGoods for 16 alleged violations of workplace safety standards. The retailer faces a total of \$233,500 in proposed fines, chiefly for exit access, fire and crushing hazards at its Commack, N.Y., store.

Responding to an employee complaint, OSHA found exit routes obstructed by stock and equipment, an exit route too narrow for passage, stacked material that prevented employees from identifying the nearest exit, blocked access to fire extinguishers, workers not trained in fire extinguisher use and boxes stored in unstable 8-foot high tiers.

OSHA had cited Home Goods in 2006 and 2007 for similar conditions at the company's Mount Olive, N.J., and Somers, N.Y., locations. As a result of what OSHA calls "recurring conditions", OSHA issued the company five repeat citations, with \$200,000 in proposed fines, for the hazards at the Commack store.

"It's been 99 years since the fire at The Triangle Shirtwaist Co. in New York City took the lives of nearly 150 workers and almost 19 years since two workers were killed when they were unable to exit the McCrory's store in Huntington Station, N.Y., during a fire," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. "Blocked fire exits can be deadly. It is that simple."

OSHA's Commack inspection identified additional hazards, including a defective fire alarm box, a missing exit sign, electrical hazards and inadequate chemical hazard communication. These conditions resulted in nine serious citations, with \$32,500 in fines. Finally, the store was issued one other-than-serious citation, with a \$1,000 fine, for not providing injury and illness logs.

"There can be no delay in exiting a workplace during a fire or other emergency when the difference between escape and injury or death can be measured in seconds," said Michaels.

"Employers must ensure that exit routes are unobstructed at all locations."

"One means of preventing recurring hazards is for employers to establish an effective comprehensive workplace safety and health program through which involve their employees in proactively evaluating, identifying and eliminating hazards," said Robert Kulick, OSHA's regional administrator in New York.

A fact sheet covering emergency exit routes is available

at http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/emergency-exit-routes-factsheet.pdf.



Need help with developing your emergency action plan call [Advanced Safety & Health](tel:1-866-339-8040) at 1-866-339-8040

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