

SAFE WORKPLACE

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Two Men Imprisoned in Rare OSHA Criminal Case

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. — The owners of a South Carolina communications tower company were given three-month prison sentences for willful violation of federal safety rules that led to a worker's death. The owners of South East Towers in St. Stephen, S.C., were sentenced in July 1997 on guilty pleas entered in April 1997 following an incident in which a man fell 150 to his death while retrieving equipment from a tower in Jacksonville last year. The man was not wearing the proper safety equipment, federal prosecutors said.

The director of the Jacksonville Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) office said that **criminal prosecutions have been pursued in the past without success, but in this case, OSHA was able to show that the employers know about the violations that led to the worker's death.**

Citing an attempted cover-up, the assistant U.S. attorney asked a U.S. magistrate to impose the maximum six months' imprisonment. The magistrate ordered the men to pay more than \$7,300 to the funeral home that handled the worker's funeral.