

U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration
5003 West American Prairie Drive
Peoria, IL 61615



August 5, 2021

Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
and its successors
420 W. Marion
Monticello, IL 61856

Dear Employer:

Enclosed you will find citations for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (the Act) which may have accompanying proposed penalties. Also enclosed is a booklet entitled, "Employer Rights and Responsibilities Following an OSHA Inspection", (OSHA 3000-04R) revised 2018, which explains your rights and responsibilities under the Act. If you have any questions about the enclosed citations and penalties, I would welcome further discussions in person or by telephone. Please contact me at (309) 589-7033.

You will note on page 6 of the booklet that, for violations which you do not contest, you must (1) notify this office promptly by letter that you have taken appropriate corrective action within the time set forth on the citation; and (2) pay any penalties assessed. Please inform me of the abatement steps you have taken and of their dates together with adequate supporting documentation; e.g., drawings or photographs of corrected conditions, purchase/work orders related to abatement actions, air sampling results. This information will allow us to close the case.

As indicated on page 3 of the booklet, you may request an informal conference with me during the 15-working-day notice of contest period. During such an informal conference you may present any evidence or views which you believe would support an adjustment to the citation or the penalty.

If you are considering a request for an informal conference to discuss any issues related to this Citation and Notification of Penalty, you must take care to schedule it early enough to allow time to contest after the informal conference, should you decide to do so. Please keep in mind that a written letter of intent to contest must be submitted to the Area Director within 15 working days of your receipt of the citation. The running of this contest period is not interrupted by an informal conference.

If you decide to request an informal conference, please complete the attached notice at the bottom of this letter and post it next to the Citations as soon as the time, date and the place of the informal conference have been determined. Be sure to bring to the conference with you any and all supporting documentation of existing conditions as well as of any abatement steps taken thus far. If conditions warrant, we can enter into an informal settlement agreement which amicably resolves this matter without litigation or contest.

You should be aware that OSHA publishes information on its inspection and citation activity on the Internet under the provisions of Electronic Freedom of Information Act. The information related to these alleged violations will be posted when our system indicates that you have received this citation. You are encouraged to review the information concerning your establishment at www.osha.gov. If you have any dispute with the accuracy of the information displayed, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Barry Salerno

Barry Salerno
Area Director

Enclosures

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
5003 West American Prairie Drive
Peoria, IL 61615



Citation and Notification of Penalty

To:
Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
and its successors
420 W. Marion
Monticello, IL 61856

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021

Inspection Site:
106 South Main Street
Pierson Station, IL 61929

The violation(s) described in this Citation and Notification of Penalty is (are) alleged to have occurred on or about the day(s) the inspection was made unless otherwise indicated within the description given below.

This Citation and Notification of Penalty (this Citation) describes violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. The penalty(ies) listed herein is (are) based on these violations. You must abate the violations referred to in this Citation by the dates listed and pay the penalties proposed, unless within 15 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays) from your receipt of this Citation and Notification of Penalty **you either call to schedule an informal conference (see paragraph below) or** you mail a notice of contest to the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above. Please refer to the enclosed booklet (OSHA 3000) which outlines your rights and responsibilities and which should be read in conjunction with this form. Issuance of this Citation does not constitute a finding that a violation of the Act has occurred unless there is a failure to contest as provided for in the Act or, if contested, unless this Citation is affirmed by the Review Commission or a court.

Posting - The law requires that a copy of this Citation and Notification of Penalty be posted immediately in a prominent place at or near the location of the violation(s) cited herein, or, if it is not practicable because of the nature of the employer's operations, where it will be readily observable by all affected employees. This Citation must remain posted until the violation(s) cited herein has (have) been abated, or for 3 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays), whichever is longer.

Informal Conference - An informal conference is not required. However, if you wish to have such a conference you may request one with the Area Director during the 15 working day contest period by calling (309) 589-7033. During such an informal conference, you may present any evidence or views which you believe would support an adjustment to the citation(s) and/or penalty(ies).

If you are considering a request for an informal conference to discuss any issues related to this Citation and Notification of Penalty, you must take care to schedule it early enough to allow time to contest after the informal conference, should you decide to do so. Please keep in mind that a written letter of intent to contest must be submitted to the Area Director within 15 working days of your receipt of this Citation. The running of this contest period is not interrupted by an informal conference.

If you decide to request an informal conference, please complete, remove and post the Notice to Employees next to this Citation and Notification of Penalty as soon as the time, date, and place of the informal conference have been determined. Be sure to bring to the conference any and all supporting documentation of existing conditions as well as any abatement steps taken thus far. If conditions warrant, we can enter into an informal settlement agreement which amicably resolves this matter without litigation or contest.

Right to Contest – You have the right to contest this Citation and Notification of Penalty. You may contest all citation items or only individual items. You may also contest proposed penalties and/or abatement dates without contesting the underlying violations. **Unless you inform the Area Director in writing that you intend to contest the citation(s) and/or proposed penalty(ies) within 15 working days after receipt, the citation(s) and the proposed penalty(ies) will become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission and may not be reviewed by any court or agency.**

Penalty Payment – Penalties are due within 15 working days of receipt of this notification unless contested. (See the enclosed booklet and the additional information provided related to the Debt Collection Act of 1982.) Make your check or money order payable to “DOL-OSHA”. Please indicate the Inspection Number on the remittance. You can also make your payment electronically at www.pay.gov. At the top of the [pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) homepage, type "OSHA" in the Search field and select Search. From **OSHA Penalty Payment Form** search result, select Continue. The direct link is:

<https://www.pay.gov/paygov/forms/formInstance.html?agencyFormId=53090334>

You will be required to enter your inspection number when making the payment. Payments can be made by credit card or Automated Clearing House (ACH) using your banking information. Payments of \$25,000 or more require a Transaction ID, and also must be paid using ACH. If you require a Transaction ID, please contact the OSHA Debt Collection Team at (202) 693-2170.

OSHA does not agree to any restrictions or conditions or endorsements put on any check, money order, or electronic payment for less than the full amount due, and will process the payments as if these restrictions or conditions do not exist.

Notification of Corrective Action – For each violation which you do not contest, you must provide **abatement certification** to the Area Director of the OSHA office issuing the citation and identified above. This abatement certification is to be provided by letter within 10 calendar days after each abatement date. Abatement certification includes the date and method of abatement. If the citation indicates that the violation was corrected during the inspection, no abatement certification is required for that item. The abatement certification letter must be posted at the location where the violation appeared and the corrective action took place or employees must otherwise be effectively informed about abatement activities. A sample abatement certification letter is enclosed with this Citation. In addition, where the citation indicates that **abatement documentation** is necessary, evidence of the purchase or repair of equipment, photographs or video, receipts, training records, etc., verifying that abatement has occurred is required to be provided to the Area Director.

Employer Discrimination Unlawful – The law prohibits discrimination by an employer against an employee for filing a complaint or for exercising any rights under this Act. An employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against may file a complaint no later than 30 days after the discrimination occurred with the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above.

Employer Rights and Responsibilities – The enclosed booklet (OSHA 3000) outlines additional employer rights and responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with this notification.

Notice to Employees – The law gives an employee or his/her representative the opportunity to object to any abatement date set for a violation if he/she believes the date to be unreasonable. The contest must be mailed to the U.S. Department of Labor Area Office at the address shown above and postmarked within 15 working days (excluding weekends and Federal holidays) of the receipt by the employer of this Citation and Notification of Penalty.

Inspection Activity Data – You should be aware that OSHA publishes information on its inspection and citation activity on the Internet under the provisions of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act. The information related to these alleged violations will be posted when our system indicates that you have received this citation. You are encouraged to review the information concerning your establishment at www.osha.gov. If you have any dispute with the accuracy of the information displayed, please contact this office.



NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES OF INFORMAL CONFERENCE

An informal conference has been scheduled with OSHA to discuss the citation(s) issued on 08/05/2021. The conference will be held by telephone or at the OSHA office located at 5003 West American Prairie Drive, Peoria, IL 61615 on _____ at _____.

Employees and/or representatives of employees have a right to attend an informal conference.

CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTIVE ACTION WORKSHEET

Inspection Number: 1522382

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021

List the specific method of correction for each item on this citation in this package that does not read "Corrected During Inspection" and return to: **U.S. Department of Labor – Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 5003 West American Prairie Drive, Peoria, IL 61615.**

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

Citation Number _____ and Item Number _____ was corrected on _____
By (Method of Abatement): _____

I certify that the information contained in this document is accurate and that the affected employees and their representatives have been informed of the abatement.

Signature

Date

Typed or Printed Name

Title

NOTE: 29 USC 666(g) whoever knowingly makes any false statements, representation or certification in any application, record, plan or other documents filed or required to be maintained pursuant to the Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or by imprisonment of not more than 6 months or both.

POSTING: A copy of completed Corrective Action Worksheet should be posted for employee review

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021



Citation and Notification of Penalty

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929

Citation 1 Item 1 Type of Violation: **Serious**

29 CFR 1910.132(d)(1)(i): When the employer assessed the workplace hazard(s) and determined that hazard(s) were present, the employer had not selected and/or used the types of personal protective equipment that would protect the affected employee from those hazards:

On or about February 12, 2021, an employee was exposed to falls in excess of 10 feet without personal protective equipment to provide fall protection, while loading a railcar at the facility in Pierson Station, Illinois.

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:
Proposed Penalty:

Corrected During Inspection
\$8,601.00

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021



Citation and Notification of Penalty

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929

Citation 2 Item 1 Type of Violation: **Willful - Serious**

29 CFR 1910.272(g)(1)(ii): Prior to entry, all mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, and pneumatic equipment which presented a danger to employees inside grain storage structures in the grain handling facility were not disconnected, locked out and tagged, blocked-off, or otherwise prevented from operating by other equally effective means or methods:

On or about February 19, 2021, employees were exposed to engulfment hazards in Grain Bin #15, and the employer did not de-energize and lockout all equipment creating hazards to the employees, including all unloading equipment.

ABATEMENT DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR THIS ITEM

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:
Proposed Penalty:

August 16, 2021
\$98,303.00

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021



Citation and Notification of Penalty

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929

Citation 2 Item 2 Type of Violation: **Willful - Serious**

29 CFR 1910.272(g)(3): In the grain handling facility an observer, equipped to provide assistance, was not stationed outside the bin, silo, or tank being entered by an employee:

On or about February 19, 2021, employees were exposed to engulfment hazards in Grain Bin #15, and the employer did not provide an observer, equipped to provide assistance, outside the bin.

ABATEMENT DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR THIS ITEM

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:
Proposed Penalty:

August 16, 2021
\$98,303.00

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021



Citation and Notification of Penalty

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929

Citation 2 Item 3 Type of Violation: **Willful - Serious**

29 CFR 1910.272(g)(6): Employees at the grain handling facility entered bins, silos, or tanks underneath a bridging condition, or where a buildup of grain products on the side could fall and bury them:

On or about February 19, 2021, employees were exposed to engulfment hazards in Grain Bin #15, and the employer permitted employees to enter Grain Bin #15, with the buildup of grain on the sides of the bin at heights from 10 -15 feet, which resulted in an engulfment incident.

ABATEMENT DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR THIS ITEM

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:
Proposed Penalty:

August 16, 2021
\$98,303.00

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Inspection Number: 1522382
Inspection Date(s): 03/30/2021 - 07/30/2021
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021



Citation and Notification of Penalty

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929

Citation 3 Item 1 Type of Violation: **Other-than-Serious**

29 CFR 1910.272(g)(1)(iii): The atmosphere within a bin, silo, or tank in the grain handling facility was not tested for oxygen content prior to employee entry:

On or about February 19, 2021, employer did not test the air for oxygen content prior to permitting employee entry into Grain Bin #15.

ABATEMENT DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR THIS ITEM

Date By Which Violation Must be Abated:
Proposed Penalty:

August 16, 2021
\$0.00

Barry Salerno
Area Director

See pages 1 through 4 of this Citation and Notification of Penalty for information on employer and employee rights and responsibilities.

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
5003 West American Prairie Drive
Peoria, IL 61615



**INVOICE /
DEBT COLLECTION NOTICE**

Company Name: Topflight Grain Cooperative, Inc.
Inspection Site: 106 South Main Street, Pierson Station, IL 61929
Issuance Date: 08/05/2021

Summary of Penalties for Inspection Number: 1522382

Citation 1 Item 1, Serious	\$8,601.00
Citation 2 Item 1, Willful - Serious	\$98,303.00
Citation 2 Item 2, Willful - Serious	\$98,303.00
Citation 2 Item 3, Willful - Serious	\$98,303.00
Citation 3 Item 1, Other-than-Serious	\$0.00

TOTAL PROPOSED PENALTIES: \$303,510.00

To avoid additional charges, please remit payment promptly to this Area Office for the total amount of the uncontested penalties summarized above. Make your check or money order payable to: "DOL-OSHA". Please indicate OSHA's Inspection Number (indicated above) on the remittance. You can also make your payment electronically at www.pay.gov. At the top of the [pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov) homepage, type "OSHA" in the Search field and select Search. From the **OSHA Penalty Payment Form** search result, select Continue. The direct link is: <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/forms/formInstance.html?agencyFormId=53090334>. You will be required to enter your inspection number when making the payment. Payments can be made by credit card or Automated Clearing House (ACH) using your banking information. Payments of \$25,000 or more require a Transaction ID, and also must be paid using ACH. If you require a Transaction ID, please contact the OSHA Debt Collection Team at (202) 693-2170.

OSHA does not agree to any restrictions or conditions or endorsements put on any check, money order, or electronic payment for less than the full amount due, and will cash the check or money order as if these restrictions or conditions do not exist.

If a personal check is issued, it will be converted into an electronic fund transfer (EFT). This means that our bank will copy your check and use the account information on it to electronically debit your account for the amount of the check. The debit from your account will then usually occur within 24 hours and will be shown on your regular account statement. You will not receive your original check back. The bank will destroy your original check, but will keep a copy of it. If the EFT cannot be completed because of insufficient funds or closed

account, the bank will attempt to make the transfer up to two times.

Pursuant to the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-365) and regulations of the U.S. Department of Labor (29 CFR Part 20), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is required to assess interest, delinquent charges, and administrative costs for the collection of delinquent penalty debts for violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Interest: Interest charges will be assessed at an annual rate determined by the Secretary of the Treasury on all penalty debt amounts not paid within one month (30 calendar days) of the date on which the debt amount becomes due and payable (penalty due date). The current interest rate is one percent (1%). Interest will accrue from the date on which the penalty amounts (as proposed or adjusted) become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (that is, 15 working days from your receipt of the Citation and Notification of Penalty), unless you file a notice of contest. Interest charges will be waived if the full amount owed is paid within 30 calendar days of the final order.

Delinquent Charges: A debt is considered delinquent if it has not been paid within one month (30 calendar days) of the penalty due date or if a satisfactory payment arrangement has not been made. If the debt remains delinquent for more than 90 calendar days, a delinquent charge of six percent (6%) per annum will be assessed accruing from the date that the debt became delinquent.

Administrative Costs: Agencies of the Department of Labor are required to assess additional charges for the recovery of delinquent debts. These additional charges are administrative costs incurred by the Agency in its attempt to collect an unpaid debt. Administrative costs will be assessed for demand letters sent in an attempt to collect the unpaid debt.

Barry Salerno
Area Director

August 5, 2021
Date