

A **43 year old male** employee contracted **COVID-19** while working as an installer. This company delivers commercial kitchen equipment to restaurants. Installers deliver the kitchen equipment to various job sites using a 26' box truck.

Installers work in teams of two and spend their work shifts delivering kitchen equipment to various commercial locations throughout the state. They spend a very brief amount of time each day, when in the vicinity of the warehouse from which they are based out of, being briefed by the facility manager on the deliveries that are expected to be made and the pair of installers spend the rest of their workday travelling to the delivery sites via large box trucks. Once at the desired location, the installers unload the kitchen equipment at the facility and place the equipment in the desired location. The title of “installer” is a bit deceptive in that the employees do not actually install the equipment at the site. The victim spent the week of 8/2/2021 through 8/6/2021 travelling and make deliveries with a fellow employee.

On 8/2/2021, the pair travelled in a delivery box truck to Chicken Guy! Restaurant. Once at the restaurant the two installers unloaded/placed the kitchen equipment and checked into a hotel to stay the night in Nashville. On 8/3/2021, the pair made another delivery in the local Nashville area before returning to Chicken Guy! to retrieve several pieces of equipment that were being returned to the Knoxville warehouse location. On Wednesday, 8/4/2021, the two installers picked up another delivery in Knoxville and travelled to Asheville, NC to drop of kitchen equipment at another restaurant and returned to Knoxville the same day. On 8/5/2021, the pair returned to Nashville to make another delivery and returned to Knoxville the same day. On 8/6/2021, the two installers made deliveries in the Knoxville area to Hard Knox Pizza and Knox County Ice Chalet.

On 8/7/2021, both employees began feeling sick and exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19. On 8/8/2021, both employees went to the hospital. Upon arriving at the hospital, both employees were tested for COVID-19 and exhibited positive results. The victim was kept at the hospital until 8/10/2021 before returning home and quarantining. On 8/16/2021, the victim returned to the hospital due to the increasing severity of his symptoms. He remained at the hospital until his death on 9/17/2021.

It was determined that the installers were not wearing any facial coverings while in close proximity to each other in the truck cab/at the delivery job site. There were no housekeeping procedures or cleaning protocols put in place or enforced regarding the trucks in which the installers were riding to each job site, sometimes for multiple hours throughout the day. Potential social distancing barriers that could have been installed in the cab of the trucks were never considered or equipped. Additionally, installers routinely used the air conditioning inside the cab of the truck instead of rolling down the windows as recommended by CDC guidelines.

Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1 Item 1

Type of Violation: Serious

\$3,000

TCA 50-3-105(1): The employer did not furnish employment and a place of employment which were free from recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.

The employer failed to ensure that the installers' place of employment, specifically the interior cabs of delivery box trucks and on-site delivery locations, were kept free from the recognized hazard of exposure to COVID-19, which is likely to cause death or serious harm to the employees.



