

New York Personal Injury Lawyer Recalls the Lessons of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

Ever year, March 25 is a day held in honor by labor activists, New York personal injury lawyers, and supporters of the worker's rights movement.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK -- March 25, 2011 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. This was a horrifying New York factory accident where 146 people lost their lives in a sweatshop.

Many of the people who died in the [work related accident](#) in New York burned to death on a factory floor, trapped in the building by a locked exit doors and firefighting equipment that couldn't reach high enough. There were also no warning systems, no fire sprinkler systems, no law mandated fire drills, no occupancy limits and no truly usable fire escapes. Dozens of people jumped nine stories to their deaths on the Greenwich Village sidewalk below rather than burn alive.

“The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire is a [workplace accident](#) that did not have to be so deadly. I think that no one can deny that things could have been done differently,” said David Perecman, a [New York personal injury lawyer](#) and [construction accident lawyer](#).

The tragic industrial fire was a major turning point for the labor and worker safety movements in America. Partly in response to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory tragedy, the Department of Labor was established. The first comprehensive workers' compensation law was passed in Wisconsin in 1911. Pro-labor lobbying grew as individuals began to accept that workers had a right to organize unions, to protect themselves against certain workplace abuses.

One hundred years later, workers are still at risk of injuries or death at work. Even though employers must follow a federal standard of safety, and injured workers can be compensated for injuries that happen at work, preventable workplace injuries and workplace deaths still happen on a regular basis.

“Work remains to be done in workplaces across New York to ensure that tragedies like Triangle Shirtwaist – or any New York workplace injuries or deaths - truly become a thing of the past,” said New York personal injury lawyer Perecman.

In 2009, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued \$87,430,000 in proposed penalties – the largest total penalty in OSHA's history – to BP Products North America Inc. for the company's failure to correct potential workplace hazards faced by employees. Safety violations resulted in a massive explosion at BP's Texas refinery with 15 workplace deaths and 170 people injured in March, 2005.

Recently, OSHA fined a New York demolition contractor, for nine “willful and serious violations of workplace safety and health standards.” OSHA's inspection found employees exposed to [scaffolding accidents](#) like falls from scaffolds up to 40 feet while working without fall protection. The employer also failed to determine lead exposure levels and provide protective measures for employees while they were demolishing materials known to have lead paint.

Luckily there were no injuries at the New York workplace or deaths. OSHA fined the company \$52,500.

"Some construction accidents could be entirely preventable," said [New York construction accident lawyer](#) Perelman. “[Falls from a scaffolding](#) and lead exposure are two of the most common and well-known hazards construction workers can face during demolition operations. [Scaffolding accidents](#) including falls can injure or kill a worker while lead exposure can cause irreparable damage to a person’s body.”

New York construction accident lawyer Perelman settled a [construction accident case](#) in New York for \$10,000,000 involving a worker who fell from the scaffold.

Perelman, founder of the [New York construction accident firm](#) The Perelman Firm has had over 16 cases which have been settled or have been tried for a verdict for more than \$750,000.

“In many cases, you’ll see that a lack of safety standards, and the cold calculus of money, cause horrific accidents,” said Perelman, a construction accident lawyer in New York for over 30 years. “Thankfully, today there are many laws that govern the condition of workplaces, and New York construction accident lawyers willing to fight hard for the rights of construction accident victims.”

About David Perelman and The Perelman Firm, PLLC:

For the past 30 years, the personal injury accident, auto accident, construction accident, and medical malpractice lawyers at The Perelman Firm, PLLC have championed all types of cases concerning personal injury. David Perelman, founder of the Firm, is a Board Director and the past Secretary and Treasurer of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association (NYSTLA) and a chair of its Labor Law Committee. Mr. Perelman's achievements have brought him recognition as an Honoree in the National Law Journal's Hall of Fame, in New York Magazine's "The Best Lawyers in America" and The New York Times Magazine "New York Super Lawyers, Metro Edition" for the years 2007-2010.

<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2010/12/02/price-freedom>

The Firm has recovered millions of dollars for its clients. Among the more recent victories, Mr. Perelman won a \$15 million verdict* for a construction accident, a \$5.35 million dollar verdict** for an automobile accident, and a

\$40 million dollar structured settlement for medical malpractice***.

*later settled while on appeal for \$7.940 million

** later settled for \$3.5 million

*** total potential payout

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