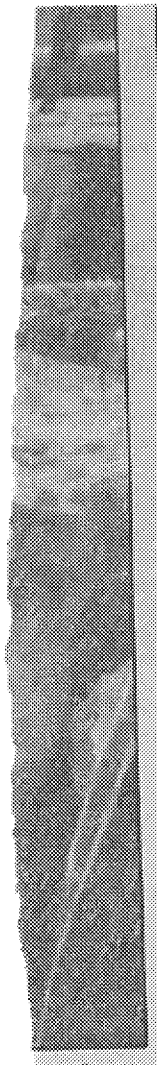

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plant itself. Proposed penalties were $1.2 million.

The proposed penalties were $6.1 million at Fairless, where the accusations were more extensive. The charges include permitting electrical hazards, failing to provide safe working surfaces, violating crane-safety standards, failing to properly guard machines and power transmission equipment and failing to keep accurate injury and illness records.

There have been three employee deaths at the two USX plants in the past two years and 17 since 1972, OSHA said. "The seriousness of the threat to worker safety and health in the two plants cannot be underestimated," said Linda Anku, chief of OSHA's Philadelphia office.

"The big problem is that USX management has proved unwilling to devote the necessary resources and manpower to removing hazards and to safeguarding safety and health in the plants," she said.

OSHA said USX, which has 15 working days to contest the citations and penalties, ignored many alleged violations despite an agreement two years ago to eliminate deficiencies.

"Company managers have known about many of these safety and health deficiencies for years, yet have failed to take action to correct the hazards," said Gerald F. Scannell, the assistant labor secretary in charge of OSHA.

USX said it has not yet reviewed the charges in detail, but has corrected safety problems brought to its attention.

"There is no consideration more important than the health and safety of our employees," said Thomas Ferrall, a spokesman for USX, last night. "Our commitment to the people of Clairton, Fairless and all our plants is to provide a safe and healthy workplace. We think we are doing that."

OSHA began its inspection of Clairton, which employs 1,500 in the production of blast furnace coke, on May 8 following a complaint by the United Steelworkers of America.

The agency opened its investigation of Fairless on June 7. That study was prompted by reports of fatalities and complaints filed by four employees. Fairless produces steel products and employs 4,000 workers.

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