

MEMORANDUM

April 9, 2025

To: Interested Parties

From: The AFL-CIO

RE: OSHA Inspections and Citations for Preventable Hazards Involving Elon Musk

Elon Musk's Disregard For Worker Safety At His Companies

Elon Musk's record of union-busting and attempts to violate the rights of the workers at his companies is well known and documented; he even filed a lawsuit to try to bust the National Labor Relations Board rather than be held accountable for breaking his legal obligations as an employer.

What's less known is that Musk not only tramples on his workers' right to organize a union and collectively bargain but also jeopardizes the health and safety of the workers at his companies. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency that sets and enforces jobsite safety standards so that workers go home safe and well at the end of their shift, has several ongoing investigations into Musk's companies for gross mistreatment and even abuse of workers. As Musk, through his unaccountable fake government agency "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), seeks to exert unilateral control over the functioning of the federal government, including by breaking into confidential data, his record as a boss should be of concern to every worker in America.

Musk has routinely disparaged worker safety. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, Musk tried to force workers at a Tesla factory to go to work in person despite the stay-at-home order issued by the government. He [called](#) the stay-at-home order "fascist" on an earnings call with shareholders. At SpaceX, Musk reportedly [discouraged](#) workers from wearing yellow safety vests because he "doesn't like bright colors," and he even had machines with yellow safety paint on them repainted in blue or black.

The following list includes recent OSHA inspections and violations related to Musk's companies. The information covers recent and ongoing investigations, including ones in which workers have been killed or injured on the job, as well as citations and fines against the companies for violating the law. The investigations listed are sourced from OSHA records, news reports, lawsuits and whistleblower testimonies. This list will be updated periodically.

OSHA Violations by Company

- I. [Tesla Inc.](#)
- II. [SpaceX](#)
- III. [The Boring Company](#)
- IV. [SolarCity Corporation](#)

I. Tesla Inc.

There are 27 open cases with violations, 17 of which are included here, and two active investigations with no violations issued yet. 17 included here. In many cases, Tesla refuses to pay small fines and prolongs the process by contesting the citations. In most cases, the hazards do not have to be fixed while the citation is under contest, leaving workers in danger.

Cases:

- **OSHA Opened an Inspection Emphasizing Potential Lapses in Fall Protections at a Tesla Facility in Maryland.** [OSHA, [1/16/25](#)]
**Active Investigation*
- **OSHA Fined Tesla's Assembly Plant in Fremont, California, After a Worker Was Seriously Injured When a Tesla Vehicle Pinned Her in a Car on a Conveyor Belt.** California OSHA cited Tesla Inc. for four violations totaling \$38,000 after the car manufacturer "failed to ensure power was cut to a conveyor belt while workers were performing quality inspections." As a result, a "worker became trapped in a car after its open door struck a fixed vertical gate." [The Orange County Register, [12/8/23](#)]
**Active Investigation*
- **A Contracted Licensed Electrician Died on the Job While Working at Tesla's Gigafactory in Austin, Texas; OSHA Fined Tesla \$49,650 in Penalties.** A licensed electrician "was told to inspect electrical panels before they were energized"; however, one of the panels had power already. Journeyman Victor Joe Gomez Sr. was immediately electrocuted and left unconscious. Gomez was transported to Dell Seton Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead. [[KVUE ABC](#), 8/8/24; OSHA, [8/1/24](#)]
- **Tesla Did Not Report That a Worker Died from Extreme Heat While Building Tesla's Gigafactory in Austin, Texas.** The Travis County Sheriff's Office and OSHA reported that sometime after 3 p.m., Antelmo Ramirez began acting disoriented. A supervisor from the third-party contractor that employed Ramirez placed him in an air-conditioned truck for about 10 minutes, then drove Ramirez to a medical trailer, where he "displayed 'seizure-like activity,' vomited, and became unresponsive." Tesla didn't properly notify officials about his death. [Texas Observer, [5/8/23](#)]

- **Cal-OSHA Fined Tesla \$89,000 for a Workplace Incident That Injured and Burned Three Workers.** Cal-OSHA fined Tesla \$89,000 for seven safety violations, six of which were considered “serious,” relating to a low-pressure aluminum casting press failure that caused hot metal to spill on workers and made their clothing catch fire. “Tesla employees Jesus Navarro, Kevin Carter and Jorge Terrazas were taken to Valley Medical Center in San Jose with second- and third-degree burns. Carter and Terrazas have returned to work. Navarro, who had burns on his hands, stomach, hip, lower back and ankles, was hospitalized for 20 days” and had to continue to recuperate at home. [East Bay Times, [7/19/16](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$37,685 After a Worker’s Finger Was Amputated While Handling Clamping Fixtures. Tesla Is Currently Contesting the Citations.** On February 3, 2021, “a member of an engineering crew at an automotive manufacturing facility in Fremont was using a gantry crane to turn over a clamping fixture. While the fixture was being lowered, the worker became concerned that pneumatic hoses attached to the fixture might get pinched. As the worker reached to move the hoses, their finger was pinched by the lowering fixture, resulting in a fingertip amputation.” The worker had to be hospitalized. Tesla is contesting the citations. [OSHA, [2/4/21](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla’s Fremont Facility \$8,850 After a Worker’s Foot was Struck by a Powered Industrial Truck.** On August 20, 2020, “a worker was struck in his right foot by a powered industrial truck” and then hospitalized. On October 31, 2020, another worker “tripped over a pallet strapping band and fractured his left hip...when he tripped and fell on the concrete floor.” The worker was hospitalized and “underwent surgery to have two screws installed to secure the bone.” [OSHA, [8/21/20](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla Nearly \$7,000 for Exposing Four Workers at Austin Gigafactory to Hexavalent Chromium.** OSHA inspectors [discovered](#) “workers were exposed to hexavalent chromium in their work area in the Cybertruck body area” of the auto manufacturing facility. Tesla was fined nearly \$7,000 for exposing workers to hazardous chemicals without proper training or monitoring. [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, [11/27/24](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$7,650 After a Worker Fell from a Solar Panel Installation, Suffering a Fractured Lower Back. Tesla Is Contesting the Citation.** On October 19, 2020, a solar panel installer was working for a solar array provider. While working on the north side of the house reworking an array making measurements, the worker and a coworker used “snap chalk lines to mark off the solar panel layout on the roof. The team had completed the chalk lines on one side of the roof, at which time the worker began to retreat, walking sideways away from the completed side while releasing the chalk string. As the worker stood up from the roof and took a step away, he stepped off the north side of the roof, falling approximately 28 feet onto the backyard lawn. The worker was hospitalized to treat a fractured lower back.” [OSHA, [10/19/20](#)]

- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$13,500 for Serious Heat Violations at Its Fremont, California, Facility. Tesla Is Contesting the Citation.** The findings stem from Tesla's failure to provide outdoor workers with adequate cooldown breaks in shaded areas. The citation references a section of California's heat safety rules that mandates that workers be allowed and encouraged to take cooldown rests in the shade when they feel the need to do so to avoid overheating. Any worker who takes this type of preemptive break is supposed to be monitored for symptoms of heat illness by a supervisor and should not be asked to return to work until their symptoms have subsided. [[OSHA](#), 7/9/24]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$20,000 for Lack of Head Protections and Exposure to Falls at Facility in Western Springs, Illinois.** Workers in areas where there was a danger of head injury from impact, falling, or flying objects, or injury from electrical shock and burns, were not protected by hard hats. [OSHA, [3/30/23](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$36920 for Failing to Report a Workplace Fatality or Injury Within the Required Time Frame. Tesla Is Contesting the Citation.** Tesla did not properly or in a timely manner report a work-related fatality as required by law. The citation, which is not yet closed, is for Tesla's Fremont, California, worksite. [OSHA, [5/23/22](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla After a Worker Fell 8 Feet and Incurred a Collapsed Lung and Rib Fractures.** On February 26, 2020, cars were being unloaded by a truck driver in preparation for loading onto a train to other states. The worker fell approximately 8 feet while unloading a car. According to the worker, he was getting ready to unload the second-to-last car. "The last act he could remember was unstrapping the tire of the car. He later realized he was surrounded by people and heard sirens when he gained consciousness.... The [worker] suffered a left lung collapse and four fractured ribs on the left side and was in the hospital for approximately five days." [OSHA, [3/2/20](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$8,000 for a Serious Violation of Exposing a Worker to a Potential Crushing Hazard While Operating a Forklift.** On June 27, 2022, and at times prior, a worker "was exposed to crushing hazards while operating a forklift without wearing a seat belt. The employer did not ensure that [workers] operating forklifts such as, but not limited to, the Hangcha forklift in the shop area were protected from crushing, struck-by and ejection hazards" and that the operator used the vehicle in a safe manner. [OSHA, [8/25/22](#)]

OSHA Fined Tesla \$2,550 After a Worker Fell from a Ladder and Suffered a Skull Fracture, Orbital Fracture and Nasal Cavity Fractures. On June 2, 2020, a worker "was on a ladder performing tests on the fire sprinkler system, checking for leaks. The [worker] climbed down the ladder and fell....The [worker] was hospitalized to treat a broken knee cap, broken toes on the right foot, a skull fracture, an orbital fracture and nasal cavity fractures. She was transported to Regional Medical Center in San Jose, CA, where she stayed for four days, two of which she was in [intensive care]." [OSHA,

[6/3/20](#)]

- **A Tesla Engineer Was Left with an Open Wound After an Assembly Robot Immobilized Him.** A Tesla engineer at the company's factory near Austin was "attacked" by an assembly robot. Witnesses observed the machine pin an engineer and claw at his back and arm, leaving a "trail of blood" on the floor. "The robot was designed to handle freshly cast aluminum car parts." [Independent, [12/28/23](#)]
- **OSHA Fined Tesla \$36,000 After a Worker's Fingertip Was Amputated. Tesla Is Contesting the Citation.** On March 8, 2021, a worker "was using an angle head 1/4-inch drive, 18 volt, battery-operated torque ratchet to torque bolts on a car door. The [worker] amputated the top of her left index finger when the glove she was wearing was entangled in the tool she was utilizing." [OSHA, [3/9/21](#)]
- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Musk Reinstated Plant Operations amid Stay-at-Home Orders, Which Spurred Hundreds of COVID-19 Cases.** "Tesla's Bay Area production plant recorded hundreds of COVID-19 cases following CEO Elon Musk's defiant reopening of the plant in May....The document...showed Tesla received around 10 reports of COVID-19 in May when the plant reopened and saw a steady rise in cases all the way up to 125 in December...The data, covering the months between May and December, showed there were around 450 total reported cases. Roughly 10,000 people work at the plant." [The Washington Post, [3/12/21](#)]
- **Cal/OSHA Cited and Fined Tesla for Omitting Hundreds of Injuries in Data Due to Government Regulators.** An investigation by the Center for Investigative Reporting found that in 2018, Tesla failed to report serious workplace injuries, which skewed the company's injury statistics. CAL/OSHA cited the company the following year for omitting hundreds of injuries listed in logs at its factory from annual summary data that the company sends each year to government regulators. [[LA Times](#), 3/6/20]

II. SpaceX

Cases:

- **A SpaceX Worker Was Killed at a Facility in McGregor, Texas, While Transporting Insulation Without Proper Equipment.** Lonnie LeBlanc was pronounced dead at the scene from head trauma while transporting foam insulation for SpaceX's main hangar. When LeBlanc and his colleagues realized SpaceX did not provide straps to secure the cargo, he offered to hold down the load by sitting on it. As the truck dove away, a gust of wind blew LeBlanc and the cargo off of the trailer, slamming him headfirst into the pavement. [Reuters, [11/10/23](#)]

- **OSHA Fined SpaceX \$18,475 After a Part Flew Off of a Rocket Engine, Fracturing a Worker's skull.** At 12:44 p.m. on January 18, 2022, Francisco Cabada, “an integration technician, was performing pneumatic pressure checks on a Raptor V2 Engine while at the Integration Stand. The final step in the pressure check operation, venting, was done for the first time using an automated program as opposed to the normal manual method that had been used in previous operations. Immediately after initiating the automated venting, the worker was struck by the fuel controller cover, which broke free from the controller module. The controller cover had sheared at the vertical to horizontal beveled seam, liberating the cover face from the assembly. [The worker] suffered a skull fracture and head trauma and was hospitalized in a coma for months.” [OSHA, [2/23/22](#)]
- **OSHA Fined SpaceX After an Incident in Washington State Led to a “Near Amputation” When a Heavy Object Crushed a Worker's Foot.** Inspectors from Washington state's Department of Labor and Industries found safety violations at SpaceX after an inspection prompted by worker complaints. The inspectors concluded the site lacked a “‘thorough safety program,’ adequate communication of work rules, and a system to ‘correct violations,’ the records said. The ‘near amputation,’ as inspectors called it, occurred after a roll of material fell and crushed a worker's foot.” [Reuters, [2/13/24](#)]

III. The Boring Company

Cases:

- **OSHA Fined The Boring Company (TBC) \$112504 for Eight Serious Violations Regarding Underground Construction, PPE, and Failure to Mitigate Workplace Hazards. TBC Is Contesting the Citations.** OSHA fined TBC's Las Vegas-based site for eight violations related to medical services and first aid, personal protective equipment (PPE), conveyors, underground construction, and hazard communication. [OSHA, [6/15/23](#)]
- **A Boring Company Worker Wrote an Email to the Company's then-Safety Manager Stating, “We Have Consistently Flirted with Death.”** At The Boring Company, pressure to meet lofty safety goals has led to a disregard for safety of workers who are testing and building tunnels underground and controlling dangerous equipment. Last May, a worker at the Bastrop, Texas, worksite of The Boring Company, Elon Musk's tunnel construction startup, sent an email at 1:53 a.m. to the then-safety manager, Wayne Merideth, stating, “I feel that the company as a whole has been very fortunate these past few months that there hasn't been a fatality.” The worker told Merdeth in the email that six of 12 passive articulation cylinders—the parts of the machine that would help Boring's tunneling machine turn as it digs through the earth—failed while he was inside of it, meaning that it “could have split with me inside of it.” [Fortune, [2/27/24](#)]

IV. SolarCity Corporation

Cases:

- **OSHA Fined SolarCity \$110,000 for 10 Violations Following the Electrical Shock and Hospitalization of a SolarCity Worker.** OSHA identified 10 worker safety violations at a SolarCity solar panel installation in Amherst, Massachusetts. Four SolarCity workers were working on a 19-acre solar farm at Hampshire College when one of the workers tried to use their phone to take a photo of an electrical panel. The worker suffered electrical shock and burn injuries when he entered the electrical panel, which was energized at 13,800 volts. [Bloomberg Law, [5/8/18](#); U.S. Department of Labor, [4/17/18](#)]
- **OSHA Fined SolarCity \$6,000 for Faulty Fall Protection Systems Criteria and Practices.** On November 22, 2016, a worker “was performing installation work on a steeply pitched residential roof, approximately 18 feet above grade While using a vertical lifeline [that] was not rigged” properly, putting workers at risk of falling more than 6 feet to a lower level. [OSHA, [4/27/17](#)]

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