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# Jury awards \$48 million to paralyzed man

< PREV nwi.com 4354 Dec 12, 2008

A jury on Thursday awarded \$48 million to a rural Porter County man who became paralyzed from the waist down when he suffered a 17-foot fall from a ladder while working at an region steel mill.

Anthony Arciniega, 42, was rendered a paraplegic as a result of a Nov. 20, 2004, fall at ISG Burns Harbor steel mill, which is now known as ArcelorMittal.

Arciniega, who still works for the mill, fell from a ladder that was covered with refractory concrete due to the negligence of Minteq International, a contractor at the mill, according to court documents.

Arciniega's attorney, Kenneth J. Allen, said an injured worker cannot directly sue his employer -- in this case the steel mill -- but Arciniega was able to sue Minteq because it's a third party. Allen said Arciniega will only be able to collect \$24 million of the \$48 million if the 50 percent fault attributed to the mill is upheld, but Allen will seek post-trial to have 100 percent of the fault attributed to Minteq so that his client can receive \$48 million.

Allen said the \$48 million awarded to Arciniega and his wife, which followed a nine-day trial before Lake County Superior Court Chief Judge John Pera, is believed to be an Indiana record.

Minteq was represented by Chicago attorneys Mark Penney, John Patton and Richard Shoemaker, who did not return a call seeking comment.



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