

# Is Menzies' History of Hazardous Worker Safety Putting Workers at Risk?



## Lawsuit by Former Director of Health, Safety and Environment in U.S. Raises New Allegations

As airlines struggle to rebuild and recover from the COVID-19 crisis, the health and safety of the contracted workers important to your success shouldn't be neglected. A recently filed lawsuit pending in court by Menzies Aviation's former Director of Health, Safety and Environment for U.S. operations has raised new allegations about the company's culture when it comes to critical worker health and safety issues. Menzies has denied all charges.

**“Menzies [Washington State] employees have approximately a 4 times higher injury rate than other employees in their risk class.”**

– Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

## Airlines that contract with Menzies Aviation should take action to ensure the company's troubling history around worker safety doesn't put those contracted workers who are vital to your success in harm's way.

**Former Director of Menzies Health, Safety and Environment in U.S. Alleges Retaliation after He Raised Safety Concerns:** In the November 2019 lawsuit referenced above, Menzies' former Director of Health, Safety and Environment for U.S. operations, William Larion, alleges that Menzies Aviation terminated him after he reported numerous safety hazards by the company at BWI Airport. Larion had worked for Menzies since 2006 and alleges he was given promotions in 2012, 2015 and 2017. Menzies has denied all allegations; the case is ongoing.

In May, 2019, the Maryland Aviation Administration issued a complaint to Menzies regarding safety concerns at BWI. Larion alleges that later in the month, he traveled to BWI to investigate safety violations and, based upon his findings, issued a report to Menzies that highlighted a number of safety issues. Larion alleges that his supervisor told him that “perhaps what you saw wasn't that bad.” Only weeks later, Larion alleges that he was told he had a “poor attitude” and was “not a team player” and was told not to attend a meeting in Baltimore with the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Several

months later, approximately three months after Larion provided his report outlining safety violations at BWI, Menzies terminated Larion's employment in an alleged reduction-in-force; Larion asserts his position was the only position eliminated.

Prior to Larion's firing, the State of Maryland issued two "Serious" health and safety citations and \$5,400 in fines against Menzies in July 2019. After a second complaint was filed, the State of Maryland issued Menzies four additional "Serious" violations and fined the company \$9,025 in February 2020.

## \$580,225 Fines and judgments levied against Menzies Aviation nationwide over worker health & safety violations since 2012



## Menzies' health and safety issues go back years and stretch far beyond BWI.

**2016: Washington State Says Menzies Has Injury Rate 4 Times Higher Than Peers:** In 2016, Menzies was fined a total of \$62,000 by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) concerning 16 violations of state worker health and safety laws at SEA - 12 (75%) of those violations were deemed "serious" with the maximum fine of \$7,000 imposed for 7 of these "serious" violations. Violations are deemed serious when there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result. The state further concluded that **"Menzies employees have approximately a 4 times higher injury rate than other employees in their risk class."** Alaska Airlines, Menzies' then client at SEA, was also cited by L&I, finding that "Alaska Airlines did not provide safety devices, safeguards, work practices, processes and the means to make the workplace safe from hazards that were causing, or likely to cause, serious physical harm to Menzies ramp agent employees who handle cargo and

passenger baggage for Alaska Airlines at SeaTac Airport, Seattle, Washington."

**2014: Menzies Worker at LAX is Killed While Driving Tug without a Seat Belt. Cal/OSHA determines that Menzies "flawed safety policy" discouraged employee seatbelt use and "led to death of a worker at Los Angeles International Airport."** Menzies' safety record came under intense scrutiny following a fatal accident at LAX in 2014 that resulted in the death of Menzies ramp worker Cesar Valenzuela when he was thrown from his tow tractor and pinned under one of the tires. The vehicle did not have a functioning seat belt. Mr. Valenzuela was the fourth worker to die following a workplace accident in the company's California operations since 2006. Cal/OSHA determined that Menzies' "flawed safety policy" discouraged employee seatbelt use and "led to death of a worker at Los Angeles International Airport." Cal/OSHA issued fines against the company totaling \$77,250 for what it termed serious accident related safety violations. Mr. Valenzuela's death follows Menzies' LAX operation fined \$94,550 in 2013 for numerous violations including the type of safety violations that can cause serious harm or death.

**2012: Menzies Retaliation Against Workers Filing Complaint:** In May 2012, a Portland jury found in favor of Menzies workers who claimed they were fired after filing a safety complaint that triggered a state inspection; the jury awarded the workers \$332,000.



You can learn more about Menzies and other airline industry topics at [airlineaccountability.org](http://airlineaccountability.org)

