



2008 FATALITY REPORT

This report is a summary of sixty-two fatalities in USW workplaces, and three in other workplaces of interest, as reported to the USW Health, Safety and Environment Department for 2008.

The report does not necessarily include all fatalities at USW workplaces, only those reported to the department. Some employers are required to report by the union contract; in other cases, the information was sent voluntarily by the employer, the USW staff representative, or the local union. The reporting is probably better for members than for supervisors, contractors and other non-members.

USW fatality reports rarely contain information on deaths from occupational disease. These deaths often occur after retirement; many are not recognized as being caused by a condition at work. However, research has shown that for every worker who dies in an industrial accident, eight to ten die from long-term occupational disease.

Accident reports are very important. Other local unions can use them to prevent similar accidents. If a USW member, supervisor, contractor, member of another union, or non-union worker is killed at your facility, or dies of an occupational disease, please notify us as soon as possible. In the United States, that should be done through the USW's 24-hr Emergency Response Hotline, at **1-866-526-3480**. In Canada, please notify both your district director and the Canadian National Office.

ANALYSIS

Seven of the 65 deaths listed below are not included in the analysis that follows. Three were not in USW workplaces; four were from heart attacks or strokes not believed to have been caused by events at work immediately preceding the death. However, deaths from heart attacks are included if they were preceded by unusual conditions capable of triggering a heart attack, such as abnormally strenuous work. There were two such deaths.

Forty-four of the remaining 58 victims were USW members. Ten were contractors. Two were supervisors. Two were probationary employees. (One was on his third day at work.) Four were members of other unions which also have bargaining units at USW workplaces. Ten were Canadian; two were women. The youngest was 19; the oldest, 67.

The distribution by industry is: steel – 16; paper – 10; oil – 7 (including 4 in a single accident); forestry – 4; nonferrous metals – 3; mining – 2; utilities – 2; cement – 2; transport – 3; pipe – 2; shipbuilding, containers, chemical, services – 1 each. One member was unintentionally killed by the police outside the tire plant where he worked.

Forty-three people died from occupational injuries at USW-represented workplaces in 2007, compared to 56 in 2008. Thirty-nine of the 2007 fatalities were USW members, compared to 41 in 2008.

Some of these accidents are still under investigation, so this report should be considered preliminary.

FATALITIES IN USW-REPRESENTED WORKPLACES

1. January 3, **George Pulver**, 48, an employee of **ArcelorMittal; Mittal Steel USA** in **Conshohocken, Pennsylvania**, was severely burned over 60% of his body when his clothing caught fire while he was replacing bearing boxes in the Roll Shop. He died January 16 (13 days later). He was a member of **Local Union 9462 in District 10**.
2. January 4, **Chuck Hatcher**, 52, an electrician at **Eramet SA; Eramet Marietta Inc.** in **Marietta, Ohio**, suffered fatal injuries when he fell from an overhead crane while performing preventive maintenance. He was a member of **Local Union 1-00639-01 in District 1**.
3. January 5, **Thomas Pichler**, 27, a contractor employee of R. J. Stacey, LLC, working at **USS; Great Lakes Works** in **Ecorse, Michigan**, was in the process of preparing an abandoned 54” Blast Furnace gas line to be re-commissioned to transport coke from Zug Island to the 80” Hot Mill. There was an explosion and the line blew apart, killing him. **Bargaining unit employees** are represented by **Local Union 1299 and 9264 in District 2**.
4. January 8, **Edward Krakowski**, 54, a mechanic at **Abitibi Bowater, Inc.** in **Thunder Bay, Ontario**, suffered severe trauma to the skull, neck, face and upper body when a tree-length load of logs fell off a loaded logging truck striking the service vehicle he was driving. He was a member of **Local Union 1-02693 in District 6**.
5. January 12, **Verna Benning**, 51, an employee at **Timken Company** in **Canton, Ohio**, suffered fatal injuries when she was run over by a straddle buggy. She was a member of **Local Union 1123 in District 1**.
6. January 12, **Jason Belko**, 23, an employee at **ArcelorMittal; Mittal Steel USA** in **E. Chicago, Indiana**, was fatally injured while operating a locomotive which collided with a large truck. He was a member of **Local Union 1011 in District 7**.
7. January 15, **Joseph Gracia** a supervisor at **BP PLC; BP Amoco Chemical** in **Texas City, Texas**, was killed when a 500-pound steel filter lid blew off of a pressurized vessel. **Bargaining unit employees** at BP PLC are represented by **Local Union 13-00001 in District 13**.
8. January 16, **Jacob Amundsen**, 25, an employee at **Sequa Corp.; Sequa Coatings Corp.; Precoat Metals Division** in **Portage, Indiana**, suffered fatal injuries when he was struck by a 35,000-pound steel coil. He was a member of **Local Union 02003-13 in District 7**.
9. January 22, a contractor working at **TXI-Riverside** in **Oro Grande, California**, suffered fatal head injuries when he fell off a transport. Bargaining unit employees at TXI-Riverside are represented by **Local Union 12-00192 in District 12**.

10. January 25, **Don Sloas**, 57, an employee at **United States Steel Corp.; Gary Works** in **Gary, Indiana**, died after suffering a heart attack during a rescue training exercise. The attack may have been triggered by the stressful conditions of the exercise, and the fact that he was wearing an unfamiliar self-contained breathing apparatus, so this death is considered occupational. He was a member of **Local Union 1014 in District 7**.
11. February 12, **Frank Sinclair**, 50, a faller for **Western Forest Products; Gold River Forest Operations** off the west coast of **Vancouver Island, British Columbia**, died of injuries sustained from being struck by a falling tree. He was a member of **Local Union 1-00085 in District 3**.
12. February 13, **Kevin Batten**, 19, an employee at **Northrop Gruman Corp.; Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock** in **Newport News, Virginia**, drowned after falling through an opening while working on an aircraft carrier. He was a member of **Local Union 8888 in District 8**.
13. February 16, **Jeff Cox**, 50, a lineman at **Nisource Inc.; NIPSCO Northern Ind. Public Service** in northern **Indiana**, was fatally injured when he came into contact with a 69 kv line. He was a member of **Local Union 12775 in District 7**.
14. February 18, **Joseph Wesolowsky**, 50, a larryman helper at **United States Steel Corp.** in **Braddock, Pennsylvania**, died from a heart-related event which started while at work. His death is not considered occupational. He was a member of **Local Union 1219-01 in District 10**.
15. February 28, **James Bevins**, 47, an employee at **Unigroup Inc.; United Van Lines Professional Transportation Inc.** in **Shelby, Kentucky**, was fatally injured when he drove into the back of a slow-moving tractor/trailer on Highway 80. He was a member of **Local Union 14581-D3 in District 8**.
16. February 28, **John Wilson**, 62, was drowned when the heavy equipment he was operating entered a tailings pond at **Craigmont Mines** in **Merrit, British Columbia**. He was a member of **Local Union 7619-03 in District 3**.
17. March 5, **Norm Castick**, 54, an employee of **U. S. Pipe & Foundry Co. Inc.** in **Burlington, New Jersey**, was fatally injured when a pipe fell on him. He was a member of **Local Union 2026 in District 4**.
18. March 24, **Jim Wingfield**, 54, an employee of **ArcelorMittal; Mittal Steel USA** in **East Chicago, Indiana**, was crushed by a 5-ton counterweight for a tundish cover. He was a member of **Local Union 1010 in District 7**.

19. March 25, **Joseph Torres**, 48, an employee of **Huhtamaki OYJ; Huhtamaki American; Huhtamaki Flexibles Inc.** in **Malvern, Pennsylvania**, died of a stroke or heart attack in the plant while doing a new task that required considerable exertion. Since this may have triggered the attack, his death is tentatively considered occupational. He was a member of **Local Union 333 in District 10**.
20. March 30, **Edward Haake**, 59, an employee of **Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company** in **Topeka, Kansas**, appeared to be disoriented and confused. He refused medical attention and got into his car. Meanwhile, sheriff's deputies arrived and ordered him out of his car. When he refused, they shocked him three times with a taser, pulled him from his car, threw him on the ground, knelt on his back and handcuffed him, at which point he died. He was a member of **Local Union 307L-02 in District 11**.
21. April 11, **Ray Creel**, 39, an employee of **Mueller Industries; Mueller Copper Tube Co., Sub.**, in **Fulton, Mississippi**, was killed by an unguarded horizontal shaft of an overhead crane. He was a member of **Local Union 8420 in District 9**.
22. April 14, **Jaren Hoover**, 19, a probationary employee of **Dura-Bond Industries Inc.; Dura-Bond Pipe LLC** in **Steelton, Pennsylvania**, was fatally injured when he was struck by a 36-inch pipe suspended by a crane while working between it and another 36-inch pipe setting in a cradle. It was his third day on the job. Employees are represented by **Local Union 1688-15 in District 10**.
23. April 17, **Owen Fransen**, 55, an employee of **Island Pacific Logging** was struck and killed by a cedar windfall while he was working near **Lake Cowichan, BC**. He was a member of **Local Union 1-00080 in District 3**.
24. April 18, **Roger Prichard**, 58, an employee of **ArcelorMittal; Mittal Steel USA** in **Steelton, Pennsylvania**, was pinned in equipment and died of crushing injuries. He was a member of **Local Union 1688-01 in District 10**.
25. April 22, **Mitchell Brown**, 61, a truck driver at **Equitable Resources, Inc.; Equitable Gas Company Division** in **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**, suffered fatal injuries when his dump truck veered left and hit the dock. He died 3 days later. He was a member of **Local Union 12050 in District 10**.
26. April 23, **Dean Effa**, 43, an employee of **Nordic Capital, Inc.; Luvata UK Ltd.; Luvata Appleton LLC** in **Kimberly, Wisconsin**, was electrocuted at his workplace. He was a member of **Local Union 2-00995 in District 2**.
27. April 30, **Russell Payne**, 61, a MTM crane repairman at **ArcelorMittal; Mittal Steel USA** in **Burns Harbor, Indiana**, was fatally injured when he was struck by a large steel beam in the slab yard. He was a member of **Local Union 6787 in District 7**.

28. May 3, **Marcus Christopher Broome**, 28, a contractor at **International Paper Co.** in **Vicksburg, Mississippi**, was killed in a Black Liquor Recovery Boiler explosion. Bargaining unit employees are represented by **Local Union 9-00618 in District 9**.
29. May 8, **Calvin Craig Turner**, 35, an employee of **Toromont Industries Ltd.; Toromont Cat Ltd.**, in **Brandon, Manitoba**, was working in a Home Depot performing service work on one of the forklifts when he was crushed beneath the equipment. He was a member of **Local Union 7386 in District 3**.
30. May 18, **Brent Weikle**, 50, a non-union “replacement worker” at **Hicks Hlgds LLC; Latrobe Specialty Steel** in **Latrobe, Pennsylvania**, died of a heart attack while at work. The death is not considered occupational. **Bargaining unit employees** at Hicks Hlgds LLC; Latrobe Specialty Steel are represented by **Local Union 1537 (which was on lockout) in District 10**.
31. May 22, **John Sroka**, 24, a probationary employee of **All-American** in **Paterson, New Jersey**, died from severe injuries sustained when a 1,800-pound roll of recycled paper fell on him. Bargaining unit members are represented by **Local Union 318-22 in District 4**.
32. June 22, **Lloyd “Butch” Benjamin**, 49, an employee of **Newark Group, Inc.; Haverhill Paperboard Corp.** in **Haverhill, Massachusetts**, was killed when he fell from a ladder. He was a member of **Local Union 4-00204 in District 4**.
33. July 15, **Peter Conley**, 43, an employee of **Huhtamaki Oyj; Huhtamaki Americas Inc.; Huhtamaki Food Service Inc.** in **Waterville, Maine**, became dizzy and ultimately lost consciousness while at work. He may have had a stroke. He died 8 days later. This death is not considered occupational. He was a member of **Local Union 449 in District 4**.
- 34-37. July 18, four contractors were killed and several injured at the **Lyondell Chemical Co.; Lyondell Basell** refinery in **Houston, Texas**. A large crane collapsed during a project to change out the coker. **Bargaining unit employees** at the refinery are represented by **Local Union 227-01 in District 13**.
38. July 21, **Eugene Diserio**, 57, an employee of **Eagle Manufacturing Company** in **Wellsburg, West Virginia**, was killed when he fell off a roof. He was a member of **Local Union 15229 in District 8**.
39. July 28, **Edmund Giasson**, 51, an employee of **Cerberus Capital Mgmt.; New Page Corp.**, in **Rumford, Maine**, suffered a fatal heart attack. The case is still under investigation, but at the moment the death is not considered occupational. He was a member of **Local Union 900 in District 4**.

40-42. July 29, **Randy J. Hoegger**, 55, and **Steve C. Voermans**, 52, local union members of the International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers Local Lodge 1713 and a superintendent, **Donald E. Snyder**, 46, were fatally injured while performing maintenance activities when a high density recycling fiber storage tank exploded at **Packaging Corporation of America** paper mill in **Tomahawk, Wisconsin**. The IAM represents maintenance workers at the site. Production workers are represented by **USW Local 2-248 in District 2**.

43. July 30, **Carlos Morris**, 25, a contractor working for **Diamond E. Trucking; Bayou Steel Corporation** in **Laplace, Louisiana**, was killed when he was pinned between a trailer and loading dock. Bargaining unit employees at Bayou Steel Corporation are represented by **Local Union 9121 in District 13**.

44. August 15, **Peter Eudave**, an employee of **Asarco Ray Mines** in **Kearny, Arizona**, was fatally injured when he was electrocuted while working on a large 440 volt halogen light. He was a member of **IBEW**, but was a member of **USW Local Union 5252 in District 12** for 14 years at that same mine prior to taking the apprenticeship position.

45. August 18, **Robert Kopp**, 42, a contractor working for **Kauffman Plumbing and Heating** and a member of the **Plumber's and Steamfitter's Local 94** was fatally injured when he fell from a scaffold at **Timken Company** in **Canton, Ohio**. Bargaining unit members are represented by **Local Union 1123 in District 1**.

46. August 20, **Justin Rogers**, 22, an employee of **Canada Talc Ltd.** mine in **Madoc, Ontario**, was asphyxiated when he was overcome by water mixed with ore. He was a member of **Local Union 15303 in District 6**.

47. September 3, **Robert J. Fuchs**, 65, with 39 years of service, an employee of **Severstal Steel** in **Sparrows Point, Maryland**, was fatally injured while removing material from a deflector roof in the ore handling operation. A section of material broke off and pinned him against a wall. He was a member of **Local Union 9477 in District 8**.

48. September 16, **Xavier Sanders**, 30, a contractor at **Midwestern Roofing Service** in **Pine Bluff, Arkansas**, fell to his death while working on a roof at **Mueller Copper Tube Co.** in **Fulton Mississippi**. Bargaining unit employees are represented by **Local Union 8420 in District 9**.

49. September 24, **Joseph Williams** 28, an employee of **Kinder Morgan** in **Pasadena Texas**, was seriously injured by an explosion which happened in a pipe manifold pit. He suffered 3rd degree burns over 90 percent of his body, and died October 17. He was a member of **Local Union 13227 in District 13**.

50. October 7, **Steve Webber**, 53, a tree faller employed by **Fedje Gunderson Contractors**, located in **Nanaimo, British Columbia** was fatally injured while falling timber near Rivers Inlet on the coast of British Columbia. He was a member of **Local Union 1-2171 in District 3**.

51. October 8, **Raymond Sifuentes**, 35, a contractor employed by **Gaia Environmental**, was fatally injured while working at **BP Refinery in Texas City, Texas** when the bucket on a backhoe crushed him against a fence. **Bargaining unit employees** are represented by **Local Union 13-1 in District 13**.
52. October 11, **Tom Eftank**, 67, an employee of **Buzzi Unicem** cement plant in **Cape Girardeau, Missouri**, was fatally injured when he fell into an open hatch during a barge loading operation. It is uncertain whether he died from the force of the fall or by engulfment in the cement, which is a fine powder at that stage. He was a member of **Local Union 11-164 in District 11**.
53. October 21, **Brent Schwalm**, 43, an employee of **Mueller Electric LTD**, in **Williams Lake, British Columbia**, was fatally injured when in crashed while driving home from work. He was a member of **Local Union 1-425 in District 3**.
54. October 30, **Rocky Scullino**, 58, with 30 years of service, an employee of **Essar Steel Algoma** plant in **Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario**, was fatally injured while testing a conveyer belt system when a 250 lb. piece of iron ore fell approximately 15 feet and struck his head and upper body. He was a member of **Local Union 2251 in District 6**.
55. November 5, **Greg Mayo**, 56, an employee of **Airgas Merchant Gases LCC** in **Canton, Ohio**, was killed when he was returning empty after making a delivery of liquid nitrogen and his tractor-trailer overturned and caught fire. He was member of **Local Union 1-450 in District 1**.
56. November 5, **Jeffery Pace**, 27, an employee of **Alton Steel Inc.** in **Alton, Illinois**, was fatally injured when he fell to his death while replacing panels on a roof. He was a member of **Local Union 3643 in District 7**.
57. November 10, **Heladio Ramirez**, 32, an employee of **Highway Steel Inc.** in **Chicago Heights, Illinois**, was fatally injured while operating a crane. He was a member of **Local Union 7234 in District 7**.
- 58-59. November 20, **Dale Sharman**, 49, and **James Hammett**, 50, employees of the **Delek US Holding Inc.** refinery in **Tyler, Texas**, were critically burned in an explosion and fire. Brother Sharman died the following day; Brother Hammett died December 4th. They were members of **Local Union 13-202 in District 13**.
60. November 24, **Katharina Engnell**, 46, an employee of **Saint Gobain Containers** located in **Seattle, Washington**, was fatally injured when she was electrocuted while working on a light fixture. She was a member of the IBEW. USW members at the same location are represented by **Local Union 68T in District 12**.

61. November 27, Thanksgiving Day, **Richard Smith**, 57, an employee of **Kimberly Clark Paper** in **Mobile, Alabama**, was fatally injured while working in the dry fiber machinery area. He was a member of **Local Union 1421 in District 9**.

62. December 4, **Terry Paradis**, 45, an employee of **CN Rail**, was struck and killed by a steel rail in **Hillsport, Ontario**. He was a member of **Local Union 2004 in District 6**.

FATALITIES OF INTEREST IN NON-USW REPRESENTED WORKPLACES

These are included because the company employs a large number of USW members at other locations. However the list is not inclusive; we have not attempted to collect all such fatalities.

63. February 19, a worker was crushed by a steel coil at **AK Steel** in **Coshocton, Ohio**. He was a member of the **United Auto Workers**.

64. August 15, **Raymon Cuya**, 39, was killed at **Georgia Pacific's Savannah River Mill** in **Rincon, Georgia**, when he was pulled into a paper machine. The facility is non-union.

65. August 24, **Michael Lewis**, 26, an employee of **AK Steel** in **Middletown, Ohio**, was fatally injured in the maintenance area of the mill while changing a tire when it exploded and the rim hit him in the face. He was a member of the **Steelworkers Independent Union**.

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