



**UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA**  
**HEALTH, SAFETY and ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**2002 FATALITY REPORT**



This report is a summary of thirty-four fatalities reported to the USWA Health, Safety and Environment Department for January 1 through December 31, 2002.

- ◆ 18 USWA members died from traumatic injuries that occurred at work, two miners, along with two supervisors, five outside contractors, one non-union miner and two non-union employees in USWA workplaces.
- ◆ We have documented two additional USWA members who died of a heart attack at work.
- ◆ This report also includes one member of the Laborers' International Union of North America.
- ◆ The causes of death were:

|    |                              |   |                |
|----|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 7  | struck by                    | 4 | falls          |
| 10 | getting caught in or between | 2 | heart attacks  |
| 3  | burns                        | 2 | electrocutions |
| 3  | breathing toxic chemicals    | 2 | explosions     |

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- ◆ The type of equipment, process or working area that contributed to these accidents was:

|    |                           |   |                              |
|----|---------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 12 | fixed machinery           | 3 | hazardous substances         |
| 2  | cranes                    | 2 | electrical equipment         |
| 8  | other mobile equipment    | 1 | walking and working surfaces |
| 1  | falls of ground in mining |   |                              |
- ◆ The distribution of these fatalities by industry was:

|   |                            |   |                   |
|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 5 | steel (excluding iron ore) | 1 | seaman            |
| 1 | foundry                    | 1 | industrial gasses |
| 1 | casting                    | 1 | refinery          |
| 9 | mining                     | 3 | railroad          |
| 3 | aluminum                   | 1 | rubber & plastic  |
- ◆ Thirty-two fatalities were men; one was a woman. Their ages ranged from 20 to 63; ten were Canadian.

This report does not necessarily include all fatalities at USWA 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 USWA staff representative, or the local union.

USWA 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 USWA member, supervisor or contractor is killed at your facility, or dies of an occupational disease, please notify us as soon as possible, and send the company or local union investigation report when it becomes available.

We have detailed descriptions of some of these accidents, along with a list of recommendations. We have less information on others. If you would like a copy of the available information on any of these accidents, please contact us at:

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1. On January 1, just two hours into the New Year, **Rob Marshall**, 46, a miner at the **Bridgewater Resources Nanisivik Mine** on **Baffin Island** in the **Territory of Nunavit, Canada**, was killed when he fell into a rock crusher. Brother Marshall was a member of **Local Union 9446 in District 3**. He was the second USWA member killed at Nanisivik in five months.
  2. On January 15, **Robert Vigne**, 42, a supervisor at **Elkview Coal** in **Sparwood, British Columbia**, was struck by a sledge hammer that slipped from the propel clutch of a large mining shovel. Apparently the hammer was being used to prop the clutch open, while it was under repair. He died later that day. Brother Johnson was in his fifth shift as a supervisor; he had been a member of **Local Union 9346 in District 3** since the mine was organized.
  3. On February 8, an object that had dislodged from a nearby crane struck **Gary Scherer**, 50, a crane operator at **Atchison Casting Corporation** in **Atchison, Kansas**. At the time of his death, Brother Scherer was temporarily working as a blast operator. Brother Scherer was a member of **Local Union 6943 in District 11**.
  4. On February 19, **Roger Applepon**, 55, a test repairman at **Millennium Rail, Inc.** in **Holidaysburg, Pennsylvania**, died from a heart attack while inspecting a tank car. Brother Applepon was a member of **Local Union 6521 in District 10**.
  5. On March 7, **Chad Lamond**, 20, an employee of non-union contractor **Moran Mining and Tunnelling, Ltd.**, was killed when he fell down a ventilation raise at **Inco's Creighton Mine** in

**Sudbury, Ontario. Bargaining unit employees of Inco are represented by Local Union 6500 in District 6.**

6. On March 25, **Brian Laughlin**, 50, a reactor operator for **Inco Limited; Ontario Division (Nickel Refinery) in Sudbury, Ontario**, died from lung failure most likely caused by exposure to nickel carbonyl, a highly toxic liquid used in refining ultra-high purity nickel. Brother Laughlin was a member of **Local Union 6500 in District 6**.

7. On April 4, **Rock Lamirande**, 46, a miner at the non-union **Placer Dome Musselwhite Mine** near **Pickle Lake, Ontario, Canada**, was killed when he was pinned against a rock wall by a drilling machine. This plant is located in **District 6**.

8. Also on April 4, **Jerry Vaughn**, 54, a maintenance mechanic for **Mississippi Lime Company** in **Ste. Genevieve, Missouri**, was fatally injured when he was struck by a 92-pound dust collector bag that had been dropped from a third-floor window of a rotary lime load-out building. Brother Vaughn was acting as a spotter on the ground while co-workers dropped the bags. Dropping the bags from the building had been common practice. Brother Vaughn was a member of the Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 829. The employees at the facility are represented by the Laborers' International Union of North America as well as **USWA Local Union 169G in District 11**.

9. On April 11, **Rodney Harten**, 48, was killed at **Placer Dome's Porcupine Mine** near **Timmins, Ontario**, when he was struck by a 400 lb. piece of loose rock while operating a scoop tram. He was the second miner to die in a Placer Dome mine in eight days. Brother Harten was a member of **Local Union 7580 in District 6**.

10. On April 13, **Bob Lakusiak**, an employee of **Pauwels Canada**, in **Winnipeg, Manitoba**, fell from a ladder while he was blowing sand off the inside of a tank. He died of head injuries the next day. Brother Lakusiak was a member of **Local Union 4297 in District 3**.

11. On April 18, **John P. Arnett**, 59, an employee of **Marmon Group, Inc.; Morgantown-National Supply** in **Morgantown, West Virginia**, died of pulmonary fibrosis. The cause is still under investigation, but may be related to mislabeled cleaning chemicals he used to wash down machines the previous November, when he first became ill. Brother Arnett was a member of **Local Union 01 in District 8**.

12. On May 13, **Loretto Giacchia**, 52, an operator for **Outokumpu OY (FIN); Outokumpu Copper-Amers Buffalo Mfg.** in **Buffalo, New York**, was crushed to death when he was pulled into a bridle roll while hand sanding a defect on the roll. Brother Giacchia was a member of **Local 593 in District 4**.

13. On June 1, **John Lucero**, 28, a triper man for **Grupo Mexico SA DE CV; Asarco Inc.** in **Hayden, Arizona**, was killed when he was pulled into a crusher. Brother Lucero was a member of **Local 886-01 in District 12**.

14. On June 6, **Charles H. Thipado**, 61, a supervisor at **Goldendale Aluminum Company** in **Goldendale, Washington**, was fatally burned following the discharge of molten material during restart of a cell. **Bargaining unit employees** of Goldendale Aluminum Company are represented by **Local Union 8147 in District 11**.

15. Also on June 6, **Kevin Taylor**, 33, an outside contractor for **Murphy Oil USA, Inc.** in **Meraux, Louisiana**, died in a fire. He was in an aerial lift and had removed a secondary muffler flange, when a liquid hydrocarbon release occurred. When the hydrocarbon reached the ground, it ignited. The resulting

fire traveled up the spilling liquid and engulfed Mr. Taylor. **Bargaining unit employees** of Murphy Oil USA, Inc. are represented by **Local Union 8363 in District 9**.

16. On June 8, **Franklin Zimmerman**, 62, an employee of **Renco Group, Inc.; WCI Steel Inc.** in **Warren, Ohio**, was crushed to death by a piece of equipment while he was working in the hot strip mill. Brother Zimmerman was a member of **Local 1375-01 in District 1**.

17. On June 12, **Robert Perez, Jr.**, 35, an equipment cleaning helper at **BPU Reynolds; Sherwin Alumina Company** in **Gregory, Texas**, was killed when a 10-pound pneumatic motor fell 20 feet and struck him in the head. Brother Perez was a member of **Local Union 235A in District 12**.

18. On June 15, **Jonathon Davis**, 28, a laborer for outside contractor **Dynatec** in **Sudbury, Ontario**, was fatally injured when he hit his head after loosing his footing while recoiling survey instrumentation wire. **Bargaining unit employees** at this plant are represented by **Local Union 6500 in District 6**.

19. On June 28, **Tony Anthony**, 46, a vacuum melt operator at **Crucible Materials Corp; Crucible Specialty Metals Division** in **Syracuse, New York**, was critically injured when a high pressure vessel used in metals compaction exploded. He died early the next morning. Brother Anthony was a member of **Local Union 1277 in District 4**.

20. On July 5, **Marci Walfish**, 36, a non-union office clerk at **Welded Tube of Canada Ltd.** in **Concord, Ontario**, was killed when run over by a large lift truck carrying a coil of sheet steel while returning to her office after delivering paperwork in the plant. **Bargaining unit employees** of Welded Tube are represented by **Local Union 8328 in District 6**.

21. On July 18, **Richard C. Decker**, 59, a Great Lakes unlicensed seaman working on the **Motor Vessel Fred R. White, Jr.**, owned by **Ogleby Norton**, taking on fuel in **Windsor, Ontario**, collapsed and died of a heart attack. He had been ordered to wash down the deck with a heavy hose, normally a two-man job. Brother Decker was a member of **Local Union 5000 in District 1**.

22. On August 7, **Paul Baumbach**, 50, a crane operator at **UBACEX SA (Spain); ALTX Inc.** in **Watervliet, New York**, was critically injured when he was struck by a crane boom while attempting to rig a load of stainless steel tubes. He died the next day. Brother Baumbach was a member of **Local Union 4867-01 in District 4**.

23. Also on August 7, **Jerry Ridgeway**, 50, an employee of **Rail Link**, the switching contractor that handles rail cars at the General Chemical River Corp.; Trona Mine in **Green River, Wyoming**, died after being pinned between two railcars. **Bargaining unit employees** at the mine are represented by **Local Union 15320 in District 11**.

24. On August 8, **Harry M. Loew**, 53, a train engineer at the **International Steel Group** plant in **Cleveland, Ohio**, was killed when he was pinned between two rail cars. The ISG plant was formerly part of LTV Steel, Local Union 2265. Brother Loew was a member of an independent union that had just voted to merge with the USWA. This plant is located in **District 1**.

25. On August 17, **Paul Casillas**, 31, an outside contractor electrician employed by **Santier Construction** at **Grupo Mexico SA; Asarco Ray Mines Division** in **Ray, Arizona**, was electrocuted while installing electrical equipment at the mine. **Bargaining unit employees** at the mine are represented by **Local Union 915 in District 12**.

26. On August 23, **Robert Farrell**, 44, a crane operator for **G.A.F. & F.C. Wagman, Inc.** in **Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**, was electrocuted when he attempted to re-board a crane whose boom was touching a power line. Brother Farrell was a member of **Local 15253 in District 10**.
27. On August 27, **Joseph Y. Aduna**, 31, a bander at **Simkins Industries** in **Catonsville, Maryland**, was attempting to band a roll of paperboard when a forklift caused the stack of rolls to shift, crushing him. Brother Aduna was a member of **Local Union 12993 in District 8**.
28. On August 27, **Bruce Thibault**, an over-the-road truck driver for outside contractor, **Coastal Transport, Inc.**, made a stop at Hartco Flooring in Oneida, Tennessee. While bending over to roll up a tarp, he was killed when run over by a loaded yard-lift truck. **Bargaining unit employees** of Hartco Flooring are represented by **Local Union 1497 in District 9**.
29. On August 29, **Cay Blankenship**, 58, a laborer for **Mountain Enterprises, Charles, West Virginia**, was killed when an outside contractor accidentally backed over him during paving on Interstate I-64, West Virginia. Brother Blankenship was a member of **Local Union 14614 in District 8**.
30. On October 2, **Rod Martin**, 48, an equipment worker for **Alcoa Inc.** in **Alcoa, Tennessee**, was killed when he fell into a Dumpster pit while attempting to unload a vending machine into the Dumpster. Brother Martin was a member of **Local 309 in District 9**.
31. On October 28, **Cecil Martin**, 53, an employee of **Miramar Mining Corp.; Miramar Con Mine Ltd., Sub.**, in **Yellowknife, Northwest Territory**, was killed when he was pinned between the loader and a pickup truck while the loader was backing up. Brother Martin was a member of **Local Union 802 in District 3**.
32. On November 28, **Randy Moehl**, 47, a hot metal helper at the **Bethlehem Steel Burns Harbor Plant** in **Chesterton, Indiana**, was killed when he was struck by the lead submarine car on a remote-controlled train he was operating near a basic oxygen furnace. Brother Moehl was a member of **Local Union 6787 in District 7**.
33. On December 9, **Jeffery Baine**, 45, a venter truck driver at **IMC Potash Carlsbad Inc.** in **Carlsbad, New Mexico**, was killed when a roll of conveyor belting fell off a flatbed trailer, crushing him. Brother Baine was a member of **Local Union 188A in District 12**.
34. On December 17, **David Coneybeare**, 57, a security guard for **Securitas, Ltd.** in **London, Ontario**, died after he was run over by a transport truck at the Kellogg's plant where he was working. Brother Coneybeare was a member of **Local Union 9597 in District 6**.