

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

Good afternoon. My name is Loren Meyers I am the UAW 974 Plantwide Safety Chairman. The UAW Health and Safety Department received notification of 5 work related deaths among UAW members since the last remembrance of Workers Memorial Day.

June 2, 2022 Steven Matthew Dierkes Age 39 Local 974, Region 4 Furnace Operator Caterpillar, Mapleton foundry Mapleton, Illinois. Brother Dierkes was a new employee at Caterpillar. During his second day of “on the job training”, he was tending a 60-ton gray iron induction furnace. He was assigned the task of taking samples of molten Iron while standing on the melt deck. To sample the metal the operator uses a control panel to raise the ventilation system covering the top of the furnace. The ventilation lid pivots to expose the surface of the melt pot which is 8-10 feet in diameter and 12 feet deep. The working surface of the melt deck of Furnace #2 is normally 12 inches above the surface of the molten metal. Steven used a small ceramic cup [aka a spoon] attached to a 10-foot length of aluminum conduit to skim the surface then transfer the metal to a small mold to create a medallion [aka a sample button] that is sent to the metallurgy lab for chemical analysis. In the process of taking the second sample using the spoon to test the thermal properties of the metal, Steven was seen falling to one knee. He then rotated to his left side, rolled onto his left shoulder and back then slid into the molten bath. His body was incinerated.

June 7, 2022 Lance Winemiller Age 24 Local 3047, Region 8 Product Technician Metalsa Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Brother Winemiller was assigned to a four-person crew to conduct a final quality inspection on truck frames, in the yard sort area outside of the facility. The truck frames are stacked ten high and moved throughout the yard by Powered Industrial Vehicles [PIV]; in this case, a Taylor 30-ton PIV [fork truck]. The truck frames are then broken down in stacks of five in a sort area, [not clearly defined]. After the frames are broken down the crew makes their final inspection and places the stickers the frames. Once the frames are stickered, they are restacked ten high and taken to the load area or directly loaded on a rail car. The yard sort area has lighting, however the stacking of the frames cast shadows in some areas of the yard sort area making visibility difficult to see pedestrians. At approximately 2:50 a.m., Brother Winemiller was picking up debris when he was struck and killed by a Taylor 30 ton PIV.

August 16, 2022 Kyle Williams Age: 59 Local 1248, Region 1 Fork Truck Driver SBM Janitorial services Warren, Michigan. Brother Williams was a 59-year-old UAW worker who was employed by SBM Janitorial Services assigned to the Stellantis Warren Stamping Plant. On August 5, 2022, Brother Williams sustained serious injuries to his torso region when a bale of cardboard weighing approximately 2500 pounds, that was stacked on top of another bale of cardboard fell, pinning him against his forklift truck. Brother Williams was transported to the hospital and placed in intensive care with life threatening injuries. On August 16, 2022, eleven days after the incident, brother Williams succumbed to his injuries.

August 16, 2022 Eric Allen Osborne Age: 53 Local 523, Region 8 Electrician CSMA Metals Calvert City, Kentucky. Brother Osborne went to replace a belt on a mantel fan that blows air into a blast furnace [#6] to cool the mantel. At 8:25 a.m. on Tuesday, August 16, 2022. A camera recorded Brother Osborne climbing the steps to what is known at the facility as the “slip-in” floor. He was neither seen again nor recorded by a camera until 8:39 a.m. when his body was observed to be at the ground level on fire with traumatic injuries, well below the “slip-in” floor. Brother Osborne was working alone. No task-based risk assessment or other pre-task planning was done prior to the task.

August 17,2022 Travis Baker Age:49 Local 1268, Region 4 Paint Technician Stellantis, Belvidere Assembly Belvidere, Illinois. Brother Baker was an operator on the polish deck in the paint shop. On August 12,2022 he sustained a fall, hitting his head on the ground. Brother baker was transferred from the plant to Swedish American Hospital in Belvidere. Due to the severity of his injuries he was transferred to Javon Bea hospital in Rockford, IL. On August 17,2022, five days after the incident and being on life-support, Brother Baker succumbed to his injuries.

This is the perfect time for us to take back the issue of health and safety in the workplace. Your union has invested heavily in the health and safety education of your grievance handlers and your safety representatives. Nearly every business unit has had at least one person and maybe more sent to Black Lake in the past several years for intensive health and safety training. Your safety representative will do everything in their power to help you with your safety issues, but you have to take the first step. Identify hazards to your supervisor and ask to see your UAW Safety Representative. Accept no cheap imitations, insist on the genuine article and ask to see your steward if you don't get your safety rep in as the contract says, "As soon as possible, but no later than by the end on the next scheduled shift". As Mother Jones said, "Mourn for the dead, but fight like hell for the living", so let's get ready for the fight.