



REPORTED OCCUPATIONAL FATALITIES IN UAW REPRESENTED WORKPLACES 2008

1. **January 8, 2008 – William D. LaVanway** (died 2-4-08): **54** years old; Electrician; 14 years seniority; **Robert Bosch Corp. Chassis Systems**; St. Joseph, Michigan; **LU 383, Region 1D**. The victim was assigned to investigate a “hot spot” found by thermograph scans on a power distribution panelboard in Dept. 48. He was working on a fusible switch bucket to determine the problem in the fuse block. The victim followed established procedures placing the disconnect switch in the off position prior to opening the bucket door and tested to verify power was off to both the load side and line side of the fuse block. The fusible switch bucket is an older design which does not have visible switch blades for positive identification of their position. He was using a screw driver to demonstrate to his supervisor that the fuse clip had good compression and was not loose when an arc fault explosion occurred.
2. **February 20, 2008 – David Wentz**: **38** years old; Maintenance Mechanic: 11 years seniority; **AK Steel Coshocton Works**; Coshocton, Ohio; **LU 3462, Region 2B**. The victim was assigned to check torque on a nut in the fan assembly at the base of a bell furnace prior to the loading of coiled flat steel. The bell furnace base is located in an 11 foot deep pit. This task had become necessary before each load cycle because preventive maintenance resources have been reduced. Also, prior to the reductions two Maintenance Mechanics were assigned to perform this task. As the victim bent over tightening the bolt, an overhead trolley crane positioned and lowered a 17 ton roll of steel on to the base, crushing him. The victim was working alone at the time of the incident.
3. **March 13, 2008 – Hiram Torres**: **61** years old; Warehouse Worker; 9 years seniority; **Jose Santiago**; Catano, Puerto Rico; **LU 3401, Region 9A**. The victim was assigned as a helper to deliver food products and materials to a second floor cafeteria at a customer location. His normal job was in the warehouse and he was filling in for the regular worker that day. The driver and victim unloaded material from the delivery truck, placed it on a powered lift platform using a two-wheeled hand truck, closed the lift doors and activated the lift. Both workers walked to the second floor and opened the lift doors to unload materials. The victim stepped onto the lift platform to position himself behind the hand truck and fell through an unguarded 28” x 78” opening between the lift platform and the back wall. The second floor area has poor lighting and this was both workers first time delivering to this location.

4. **May 9, 2008 – Luis Ruiz Otero:** 37 years old; Road Worker; 4 years seniority; **Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTOP);** Yauco, Puerto Rico; **Local 2341, Region 9A.** The victim was working on an asphalt patching crew in the left lane of eastbound PR-2 when he and another worker were struck by a car. He sustained a skull fracture at the scene and died as a result of his injuries. Highway PR-2 is a 4-lane divided highway separated by a guard rail on a narrow median. Initial investigation revealed the work zone safety plan was inadequate. The work zone was condensed, traffic control devices such as barricades and barriers were not in use and DTOP workers assigned to roadway operations received little or no training.

5. **May 22, 2008 – Abel J. Gonzales** (died 6-6-08): 55 years old; Truck Driver 300; 7 years seniority; **City of Lansing;** Lansing, MI; **Local 2256, Region 1C.** The victim was assigned to drive a tandem-axle dump truck to remove material from a 'dig-down' site on a public roadway. When he arrived at the site, another dump truck (single-axle) was present in the work zone. The dump trucks had to back up to the 'dig-down' site one at a time to be loaded. The route through the work zone to the loading location was curved and slightly up hill. The victim had difficulty maneuvering the truck backwards up the route and was unable to reach the loading location. He normally drove a smaller, single-axle, dump truck. The job site supervisor instructed the drivers to switch trucks. The drivers parked the trucks side by side near the entrance to the work zone and in position to back up to the loading site. The victim gathered personal items, exited his truck and walked around behind both trucks as they switched. As he passed behind the second truck he was switching to, witnesses observed him drop some papers which blew behind the vehicle he just left. As he went to retrieve the papers, the other truck, which had just started to back up, struck him and knocked him to the ground.

6. **July 23, 2008 – Frederick A. Todd:** 39 years old; Die Setter; 19 years seniority; **Ford Woodhaven Stamping;** Trenton, MI; **Local 387, Region 1A.** The victim and other maintenance workers were preparing four dies for placement into a transfer press. The dies are moved using transfer bolsters. The transfer bolster in use was positioned in a staging area near the press doors, and parallel to a second transfer bolster. The transfer bolsters are air driven and controlled by a two-button pendant with directional movement set by three air valves. The pendant had been set down on the bolster work platform. The victim walked on the platform path (approximately 1' wide) between the two transfer bolsters to the air supply valve located 14-feet away. He turned the valve, located between the bolsters, to the on position. The transfer bolster he was working on unexpectedly moved toward the second, stationary bolster trapping the victim. He died of crushing injuries when he was caught between the pillars of the two transfer bolsters.