

United Steelworkers Union Calls for Answers on Deadly Kelowna Crane Collapse



The United Steelworkers union (USW) is adding its support to calls for answers into the tragic crane collapse that killed five people in Kelowna, B.C., in July 2021.

Kelowna RCMP and WorkSafeBC released a joint statement on Tuesday, May 16, following a 22-month investigation, but decided they would not release the WorkSafeBC investigation report publicly.

‘The families of the victims and the public deserve to know what happened and if any criminal elements were present. If there were such elements, there needs to be accountability. If there weren’t, then we need to know what happened, so tragic accidents can be prevented in the future,’ said Ed Kent, USW Health, Safety and Environment representative for Western Canada.

In the statement, the Kelowna RCMP said it is unable to provide specific details of the investigation at this time ‘in order to protect the integrity of the criminal investigation.’

‘There seems to be an eye on the criminal aspect of these devastating fatalities. We need to know what the report found and if employer negligence was to blame,’ said Kent. ‘If employer negligence was found, then it’s time to enforce the law. There need to be serious consequences for killing

workers, more than just fines. Death cannot be a cost of doing business.'

Every year 1,000 workers are killed on the job and too few corporations are held criminally accountable. The USW national campaign to enforce the 2004 Westray Law, amendments to the Criminal Code, is aimed at ending the continuing carnage in Canada's workplaces.

'Our union has been fighting long and hard to have workplace fatalities and injuries investigated as criminal events, but convictions are too few and far between. It's quite simple, really ' if you kill a worker, you go to jail,' said Kent.

The USW's national campaign, 'Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law,' targets all levels of government, law enforcement, attorneys general, and Crown prosecutors. The campaign's goals include increased training for law enforcement and Crown prosecutors in using the Westray Law and the appointment of dedicated police officers and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute workplace fatalities when gross negligence is involved.

The USW represents 225,000 members in nearly every economic sector across Canada and is the largest private-sector union in North America, with 850,000 members in Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. Each year, thousands of workers choose to join the USW because of our strong track record in creating healthier, safer and more respectful workplaces and negotiating better working conditions and fairer compensation ' including good wages, benefits and pensions.

Source: [USW United Steelworkers](#)