



Mass**COSH**

Press Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boston Workplace Deaths Unacceptable says Advocacy Group

12/11/2013 BOSTON – Two immigrant workers at construction and shipping worksites were killed less than five days apart in the city of Boston. With multi-story building under construction and new projects announced throughout Greater Boston, employers and contractors must step up their safety efforts to stem injuries and deaths, stated the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH).

“We are deeply disturbed by the deaths of two workers in the heart of our state capital,” said MassCOSH Executive Director Marcy Goldstein-Gelb. “All too often these events are labeled as accidents; yet nearly all are the result of inadequate safety measures. The buildings that grace our skylines and bridges that connect our communities should not come at the cost of lives and shattered families. As we monitor the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s investigation, we will redouble our efforts to ensure that all measures are taken so that no other worker loses their life to earn their living.”

According to MassCOSH’s 2013 report “Dying for Work in Massachusetts,” the construction industry remains one of the most dangerous for workers on the state, with six on the job fatalities occurring in 2012.

In addition to the emotional trauma that friends and families of these two workers are experiencing right now, a huge financial burden has been placed on them to cover the costs of funeral arrangements. In Massachusetts, the burial benefits allotment under workers compensation has remained at \$4,000 for decades. According to the 2010 funeral price survey by

the National Funeral Directors Association, the average funeral cost for an adult funeral is \$7,775. With cemetery plot, grave marker, flowers or obituary notices, the “regular adult funeral” cost is more like \$9,000. Transporting the body of a loved one internationally can add on many more thousands of dollars to the final cost.

To address this injustice, MassCOSH and worker, legal and community supporters are urging state lawmakers to pass the Families of Fallen Workers Burial Act, legislation which would increase the benefits allotment from \$4,000 to \$8,000.

“The Families of Fallen Workers Burial Act will ensure that no family has to shoulder the financial burden of a burial,” said Goldstein-Gelb. “The increase adds up to very little for the workers’ compensation insurance system and will mean a huge difference for families in mourning from the loss of a loved one on the job.”

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About MassCOSH

MassCOSH strives to ensure that all workers earn their living and return home alive and well. MassCOSH unites workers, unions and community groups with environmental and health activists, to end dangerous work conditions, to organize for safe, secure jobs, and to advocate for healthy communities. Through training, technical assistance and building community/labor alliances, MassCOSH mobilizes its members and develops leaders in the movement to end unsafe work conditions. www.masscosh.org