

Dockworker Had Been Drinking Prior To Fatal Port Accident, Sources Say



Authorities are investigating the death of a woman dockworker on Friday after she was struck by this front loader at the APM shipping terminal in Elizabeth. The front loader is used to move shipping containers. (Photo by NJ.com user)



By **Steve Strunsky** | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

ELIZABETH — The driver of a vehicle that struck and killed a female dockworker in Elizabeth on Friday had been drinking before the accident, and criminal charges are expected to be filed, three sources who were briefed on the incident told NJ Advance Media.

Judy Jones, 49, **died shortly after 1 p.m. on Friday**, after being struck by a top loader used to move shipping containers at the APM Port Elizabeth terminal along Newark Bay. Both the driver and Jones worked for APM, which operates shipping terminals in 38 countries.

Jones, who lived in Newark, bled to death after her leg was severed, said the three sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment on the investigation, and because charges had not yet been filed by the Union County Prosecutor's Office.

The sources identified the operator of the top loader as Victor Belo, a member of the International Longshoremen's Association union who lives in New Jersey.

Belo, 48, lives in North Arlington, according to public records.

A spokesman for the Port Authority police, Joe Pentangelo, said the investigation was continuing. A spokesman for the Union County Prosecutor's Office, Mark Spivey, declined to comment.

Pentangelo said the operator of the front loader, who he did not name, was taken to a local hospital following the incident.

"He was very upset at the scene," Pentangelo said.

Belo did not respond to a request for comment. But his lawyer, Anthony Iacullo, confirmed he was representing Belo in the investigation. Iacullo declined to comment on the assertions that his client had been drinking prior to the incident.

"Nothing is really out there yet," Iacullo said, referring to potential criminal charges.

The victim was also an ILA member, belonging to the union's Local 1233, based in Newark.

Her brother, Wayne Jones, who also lives in Newark, said his sister had been a dock worker for 18 years, and had worked regularly for APM. He said their father had been a longshoreman, and mentored his daughter on the docks.

Jones said the family was frustrated by a lack of official information about what happened or why. "We haven't heard anything," he said.

Jones was the second woman member of Local 1233 to die on the docks in less than four years. Earline Brundage, 47, of Phillipsburg, **died in February 2012** after being pinned between two shipping containers at the Port Newark Container Terminal, in an incident blamed on mechanical failure.

APM's general manager, Brian Clark, released a statement Tuesday saying he and the company were saddened by Jones' death on Friday, and their thoughts were with her family.

"We immediately notified Emergency Responders including the Port Authority Police and OSHA — and then closed our terminal," the statement read. "The accident is under investigation. We take safety very seriously — and are cooperating with authorities in the investigation.

Leni Uddyback-Fortson, a spokeswoman for OSHA, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, said the agency had launched an investigation Friday into whether workplace safety requirements had been met by the company.

She said the agency would issue a report within six months, but declined to comment on any findings so far.