

## Worker killed by falling steel planks on ship docked at N.J. port

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A file photo taken before the port opened shows the row of bollards used to moor vessels at the Paulsboro Port, Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017. (Al Amrhein | For NJ Advance Media)

By **Amanda Hoover** [ahoover@njadvancemedia.com](mailto:ahoover@njadvancemedia.com)

A 26-year-old New Jersey man working aboard a ship docked in the Delaware River was killed Sunday when two steel planks fell on him, police said.

Basim Gilliard, of Pennsauken, was unloading cargo from the ship's hold at the Port of Paulsboro when the planks dropped from a forklift and struck him around 9:15 a.m., according to New Jersey State Police Trooper Alejandro Goetz.

His death has been ruled accidental, and is not considered suspicious, he said.

A Facebook page for the Pennsauken High School football team mourned his loss:

"Our sincerest prayers and condolences go out to the family of 2010 graduate Basim Gilliard who tragically died from a work related accident today. Bassim brought energy and love to our program like none other," [the post said](#). "He will be missed. RIP."

The vessel, named Virtuous Striker, belongs to a Greece-based company called [Enterprises Shipping & Trading S.A.](#) It is 600 feet long, and was built in 2010, according to the company's site.

The company said in a statement to NJ Advance Media it "regret[s] to confirm a longshoreman was killed in an accident Sunday during cargo operations while the vessel was in Paulsboro, New Jersey."

"Upon learning of the accident, the crew immediately made all appropriate emergency notifications," the statement said. "The Company deeply regrets the death of a valued dock worker.

The company said it is working with local authorities as investigation into the death continues.

"Our friend and colleague Basim Gilliard was a hard-working stevedore who unfortunately was killed accidentally during the unloading of steel cargoes from the M/V Virtuous Striker," Steve Hoagland, speaking on behalf of Gloucester Terminals LLC, which operates the Paulsboro facility, said in a statement.

"Our prayers and sympathies go out to his family, and particularly to his young son Basim Jr.," he said. "We continue to cooperate with local law enforcement and government agencies in their review of this tragedy."

As of Thursday morning, the ship [remained in the Delaware River near Paulsboro, according to vesselfinder.com](#), which tracks the locations of ships.

The [Port of Paulsboro opened for business in 2017](#), after the area sat vacant for years. It welcomed its [first shipment of steel from Russia in March of that year](#), which officials greeted as a the start of an economic boost in Paulsboro.

The South Jersey Port Corporation could not be reached for comment Thursday.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating the incident.