



[U.S. Steel Worker Seriously Injured on Tracks After Their Repair Was Cancelled](#)

www.kenallenlaw.com

Shortly after midnight last Wednesday morning, a [U.S. Steel Gary Works employee was seriously injured](#) when the transfer car he was operating – moving coke and lime to the blast furnaces — left the tracks. The car plummeted 25 feet into the ore yard below in what steel workers call a “crush.”

The steel worker was seriously injured – so much so, he was airlifted to Loyola Hospital from the injury site. He’s known to have suffered multiple broken bones as well as a serious injury to his hip.

The Tracks Suffered “Catastrophic Failure” – Repair Had Been Cancelled

Union representatives are blaming a failure of a girder under the transfer car as the reason for the accident. Furthermore, the Union is reporting that the support girder under the tracks shows evidence of a “catastrophic failure,” and that repair work was scheduled – but had been cancelled. Which means that U.S. Steel Gary Works knew that the track was dangerous and let workmen access it anyway.

Investigations Begin into U.S. Steel Workplace

U.S. Steel reports that the company is investigating the accident. (Read that as their defense attorneys are on the job.) A complaint has also been filed with the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which will conduct its own independent inquiry into what happened on that track last Wednesday.

How Safe Are the Steel Mills Today? The Statistics Aren’t to be Trusted

If you read the statistics, industrial workers overall are purportedly working in a much safer environment – rates of injury have been cut almost in half (46%) over the past ten years.

However, in March 2010, [Business Week published an expose of those numbers](#), reporting that the Department of Labor is suspicious of the numbers that have been reported by employers. The GAO has found that employers underreport injuries to keep insurance premiums down. A Johns Hopkins professor and noted scholar in occupational injury doesn't believe that the numbers are correct – this big of a decrease just isn't realistic in her opinion.

At least one steel company has come back fighting: [AK Steel had its rebuttal to the Business Week article](#) published in the national magazine, refuting any subterfuge on its part and denying fudging of numbers to keep costs down.

Statistics versus Reality

Meanwhile, here is one concrete example of a steel worker who has been seriously injured in a work environment that is notoriously dangerous. And from the information that was provided by the Union to the media, it was an accident that would not have happened if the repairs had taken place.

Repairs cost money. Insurance premiums cost money. Money chosen over safety: who is going to explain that reality to the U.S. Steel Gary Works' injured worker and his loved ones?