

# Worker, age 24, killed in industrial accident while moving sheet metal at DPR Manufacturing in Warren, Michigan

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Support continues to pour in for the family of Matthew McCoy, a machine operator, who was killed by falling sheet metal while working at DPR Manufacturing in Warren, Michigan last Friday afternoon, June 7. McCoy, who lived in the Detroit suburb of Warren, was just 24 years old at the time of his death.

The Warren Fire Department responded to the emergency and assessed that McCoy was in cardiac arrest and had suffered other life-threatening crush injuries. Paramedics performed life support procedures and transported him to Ascension Macomb Oakland Hospital for medical treatment, where he later died.

According to an initial report released by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), McCoy “was moving sheet metal with the use of a cart. While moving the sheet metal, the cart caught an uneven edge of a walking-working surface and tipped over onto” him.

DPR Manufacturing & Services Inc., according to their website, “is a family owned & operated custom fabrication organization providing products in steel, stainless steel, and aluminum.” It has been in operation over 100 years.

MIOSHA said it had no record of any safety inspection being conducted at DPR Manufacturing.

Mike Krafcik, a MIOSHA Communications Specialist, said in a statement that MIOSHA could not “provide information on an open investigation” but noted that “our records indicate there was no prior inspection history with this employer.”

According to press reports, DPR Manufacturing President Westleigh Deguvera had not responded to requests for comment.

McCoy’s is the 13th workplace death in Michigan in 2024, as reported by MIOSHA. More than 5,000 die annually in workplace accidents in the US.

The death of Matthew McCoy follows the recent death of another young worker, Daulton Simmers, a 28-year-old worker and father, who died from thermal burns when molten metal fell on him on June 6 at Caterpillar’s foundry in Mapleton, Illinois.

McCoy was described as an extremely generous person by his older sister, Jami Reiterman. “If people needed money, he was always helping them out. He was just the greatest person in the world, really,” Reiterman said in an interview with Fox 2 News.

Reiterman went on to say that McCoy “loved video games and drawing. He was always drawing pictures. He still drew. He would come home from work and just draw for hours and just watch TV.” Reiterman noted that McCoy would produce a lot of paintings of the parts at the facility he worked at and that he “loved his job.”

She told the WWSW, “He’d help around the house or if you needed money or anything he was always the first to step up and not just me, for everybody. He was the only person who’d walk in the door after work and say, ‘hey dude, how was your day?’ Even if he had a bad one, he just wanted to hear about mine.”

She said the company had reached out to herself as well as her other brother, who previously worked at DPR, but she was waiting on the OSHA investigation before speaking further on the circumstances of the death.

Companies are supposed to maintain safe work surfaces. In Michigan the maximum penalty for a serious safety violation is only \$7,000.

Tara Bachynski, Jami Reiterman's best friend, created a GoFundMe to assist with burial services for Matthew. As of this writing the family had received well over 100 individual donations and was close to its \$10,000 goal.

Serious injury accidents involving forklifts and other vehicles used for moving stock are very frequent. Forklifts are often unstable due to heavy loads and prone to tipping over since the wheels are in the back. Visibility is often obstructed due to loads being carried in front.

Training involves classroom training and practical training as well as testing. Permits are supposed to be renewed every three years.

OSHA reports that forklift accidents result in 75-95 deaths every year and 8,000-9,000 injuries. The injuries tend to be more serious and require greater recovery time. OSHA estimates there are just under 100,000 forklift accidents a year. Rollover accidents involving forklift-type vehicles account for 24 percent of all forklift accidents and 42 percent of all recorded injuries.

Industry guidelines call for proper and recurring training of operators and vehicle inspections and regular maintenance.

In October 2022, a 25-year-old female employee died at Metalsa, a Tier 1 automotive supplier in nearby Sterling Heights, Michigan after the motorized truck she was driving flipped over and crushed her.

In response to reports of the death of McCoy, one autoworker posted on Facebook, "We are just a number in the factory world. All they care about is those parts and in my case, trucks/suv's."

Another worker wrote, "the new employees are not even usually properly trained on any equipment and are accidents waiting to happen. Not saying that this is the case with this young man but speaking of my personal experience in my revolving door shop."

Emily, a young mom, wrote that her husband had worked in manufacturing. "State agency tells them what date they're coming; they go in only to say nothing found on their reports. Duh cuz you gave them time to fix and hide the problems. This is the type of thing these workers deal with daily and in the majority of these places it seems. Plus, the turnover rate—they'll hire new people and not pay raise the older employees ... so those ones move on and it's just constantly new

hires mainly running everything."

*We'd like to hear from you. Fill out the form at the end of this report to share your experience about any workplace or safety issues at your facility. All comments will be published anonymously.*



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