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Elyria man killed in industrial accident



Filed by **Evan Goodenow** February 18th, 2013 in **Top Stories**.

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Elyria resident Randolph Vayda was killed around 4:50 p.m. Saturday in an accident at the ArcelorMittal steel plant in Cleveland where he worked.

Vayda was crushed by a railroad car after falling from it, according to company spokeswoman Mary Beth Holford, who said Sunday she had "minimal details" about the accident. "The ArcelorMittal family extends our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Randolph Vayda," Holford wrote in an email.

Vayda, 50, was the husband of Mary Vada and father of two children, Justin Vayda, 26, and Nicole Vayda, 27, according to Nicole Vayda. Vayda said in a brief interview Sunday that her father grew up in Elyria and graduated from Elyria High School. "He was an awesome father," she said.

ArcelorMittal is an \$84 billion mining and steel corporation with employees in 60 countries and steelmaking operations in 20, according to its website. It makes steel for the automotive and construction industries as well as appliances. Randolph Vayda was hired in May as a conductor by the company, which employs 1,850 employees at the Cleveland plant that opened in 1913.

Holford said the company notified the Federal Railroad Administration and Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the accident and the Railroad Administration is investigating. A spokesman for OSHA couldn't be reached for comment Sunday. In previous interviews, OSHA spokespeople said the federal agency — which has about 50 inspectors for a state with 11.5 million people — primarily relies on tips from whistleblowers rather than making random inspections.

Holford said she wasn't sure when the last death occurred at the plant. The last death involving an ArcelorMittal worker in the U.S. was in 2010 at the company's plant in Vinton, Texas, according to OSHA's website. The worker was lighting a furnace that exploded.

The Cleveland plant was cited for multiple "serious" violations in 2010. They included problems regarding exit routes, first aid and medical services, and general requirements for machines and maintenance. The company paid roughly \$30,000 in "informal settlements," according to the OSHA website.

ArcelorMittal's website said its "top priority" is safety and, "our goal is to be the world's safest steel and mining company." Workers at the plant are represented by United Steelworkers Local 979.

Mark Granakis, Local 979 president, couldn't be reached Sunday, but Jim Ciomek, co-chairman of the local's Rapid Response Committee, said the union works closely with the company to ensure safety.

"The number one goal is safety," he said. "That everyone goes home the same way they came there."

Contact Evan Goodenow at 329-7129 or egoodenow@chroniclet.com.

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OSHA spokespeople said the federal agency — which has about 50 inspectors for a state with 11.5 million people — primarily relies on tips from whistleblowers rather than making random inspections. (THAT TELLS THE REST OF THE STORY) Sorry for your loss!

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Kathy Dean-Dielman · Volunteer at Amherst Historical Society
So very sad for Wendy and the rest of the Vayda family.

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