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Bridge Inspector Electrocuted in NY

Wednesday, August 28, 2013

Federal authorities are investigating the death of a bridge inspector who was electrocuted while working on a steel railroad bridge Monday (Aug. 26) in New York.

Thomas F. Tarchak, 39, of Simpson, PA, had been with three other workers inspecting a steel railroad bridge over State Route 235 in Harpursville, NY, for Canadian Pacific Railway, officials said.

The accident happened at 11:11 a.m. Monday while Tarchak was taking bridge measurements under an elevated train track in a high lift approximately 60 feet in the air when the lift came in contact with New York State Electric & Gas power lines, according to a New York State Police [press release](#) and information from a Federal Railroad Administration spokesperson.

The electrical power line was carrying 4,800 volts. When emergency responders arrived, the lift truck was still energized and rescuers had to wait for NYSEG to halt power before they could recover Tarchak's body, [according to WBNG-TV](#).

"It looks like he was killed instantly, but we won't know for sure until the autopsy is complete," Trooper Chris Skinner [told the Press & Sun Bulletin](#).

Investigation Launched

"Canadian Pacific's deepest sympathies go out to the employee's family and friends," company spokesman Ed Greenberg said in an emailed statement Tuesday (Aug. 27).

"Our concern is with them at this time. CP is providing grief counseling through the railroad's family assistance plan for those involved in the incident and any affected employees."

Greenberg added, "A thorough investigation is underway into this tragic incident. No further details are being released as this is an internal matter."

The FRA spokesperson confirmed that that agency was investigating the fatality on the bridge, identified only as Bridge Number 592.52.

The spokesperson said the agency was unable to provide information about the bridge's age,

inspection record or other details, as the agency does not keep such records.

New York State Police said they were also investigating.

A spokesperson from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Syracuse, NY, office said that OSHA would not be investigating the incident.

Incorporated in 1881, Canadian Pacific operates 14,700 miles of track in six provinces and 13 states. The Calgary, Alberta-based company has about 16,100 employees.