Canadian Pacific Railway has confirmed that a train engineer died at its Port Coquitlam railyard on Monday night.

A CP spokesman says the company is investigating the accident but it is not releasing any details about what happened.

The employee’s name has not been released.

The Teamsters Canada Rail Conference, which represents 16,000 rail workers in Canada including 3,500 workers at CP, says the victim was a 56-year-old father with 32 years of service. The union says the circumstances surrounding the accident are unclear at this stage.

The B.C. Coroners Service says the man was from Mission.

“Our hearts go out to the locomotive engineer’s family and everyone who worked with him,” said Teamsters Canada Rail Conference president Lyndon Isaak. “The rail industry is in crisis. We have lost 10 of our sisters and brothers over the past 24 months. It’s 10 too many.”

The Transportation Safety Board is gathering information to determine if a formal investigation is required.

“We were notified last night, shortly before midnight,” said TSB spokesman Dean Campbell. “At this point, no one has been deployed to site and interviews are being conducted over the telephone.”

Coquitlam RCMP assisted in the incident but said the lead agency is the Canadian Pacific Police, which referred questions to Canadian Pacific.

“The company’s deepest sympathies go out to the employee’s family, friends and colleagues. CP is offering counselling to the family and our employees through our employee and family assistance program,” said CP spokesman Andy Cummings.
Fatal Canadian Pacific Rail Accident in Port Coquitlam
By Teamsters Canada - December 3, 2019

Laval, QC, December 3, 2019 – A Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) locomotive engineer died last night in an accident at the company’s rail yard in Port Coquitlam, BC. This is the tenth member of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) to die on the job in 24 months.

The victim was a 56-year-old father with 32 years of service. The circumstances surrounding the accident are unclear at this stage.

“My thoughts are with the victim’s loved ones and co-workers. I want them to know that Canada’s over 125,000 Teamster members stand with them in solidarity and mourning,” said the president of Teamsters Canada, François Laporte.

Safety was a central issue during the recent strike at Canadian National Railway. This latest incident at CP further underscores the need for government and industry as a whole to work toward preventing senseless railway tragedies.

“Our hearts go out to the locomotive engineer’s family and everyone who worked with him,” said the president of the TCRC, Lyndon Isaak. “The rail industry is in crisis. We have lost ten of our sisters and brothers over the past 24 months. It’s ten too many.”

Due to a Transport Canada investigation, and out of respect for the victim’s family, the union cannot comment further on this matter at this time.

The TCRC represents close to 3,500 workers at CP.

Teamsters Canada represents close to 125,000 workers across the country, including over 16,000 workers in the rail industry. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, with which Teamsters Canada is affiliated, has 1.5 million members in North America.

‘The obvious question is how’: Family of CP Rail worker killed in Port Coquitlam seeks answers

By Janet Brown, Jill Bennett and Simon Little Global News
Posted December 9, 2019 9:28 pm - Updated December 10, 2019 8:22 pm
The family of the Canadian Pacific Railway locomotive engineer who died last week at the company’s Port Coquitlam rail yard wants answers.

Kirk McLean, 56, had 32 years of service with CP. He was also a husband, the father of two boys and a hockey coach in his hometown of Mission.

His brother-in-law, Allan Serwa, says all the family has been told is that McLean died of head trauma after being struck by a yard train as he was walking across tracks after his shift had ended.

Moments before the collision, he had called his wife to say he was heading home.

“When you find out your husband’s been killed in the yard where he works the obvious question is how,” said Serwa.

“It’s so bureaucratic; there’s not one simple answer from anyone about anything. There’s just nobody that has stepped forward and said, ‘this is what happened to your husband.’”

Serwa told Global News McLean was a safety trainer with CP and a “by-the-books kind of person,” so he says many questions remain.

“He was not the kind of guy who was going to step outside of procedures and is going to end up in this kind of an accident,” said Serwa.

“So then what did happen? Is there something about the environment there that is not as safe as it could be?”

The family has been told by the coroner that surveillance images she has seen show it was dark in the railyard when McLean was hit and that he had his hood pulled up, which is something he never did.

After the Dec. 2 fatality, the Teamsters union, which represents CP Rail workers, said the death was the 10th involving one of its members in the last two years, and noted that workplace safety was at the heart of the recent CN Rail strike.

“Our hearts go out to the locomotive engineer’s family and everyone who worked with him,” said TCRC president Lyndon Isaak in a media release.

“The rail industry is in crisis. We have lost 10 of our sisters and brothers over the past 24 months. It’s 10 too many.”

Canadian Pacific, the Transportation Safety Board, Transport Canada, and the BC Coroners Service are all investigating McLean’s death.

A celebration of life will be held on Thursday, December 12 at the Best Western Hotel in Mission at 3pm.