The man killed in an incident at a Canadian Pacific Railway yard in Coquitlam last Monday (Dec. 2) has been identified as Mission’s Kirk Charles McLean.

The 56-year-old locomotive engineer had been with the company for 32 years. During his time with CP Rail, McLean achieved the level of locomotive engineer. He then began training new engineers.

He is survived by his wife Brenda and their two sons Devon and Jordan.

Details on how McLean died are still scarce.

“Well we know he came in on his train, he was an engineer himself, and he brought a train back from North Bend. He exited the train and had to cross some tracks to get to the management building and was struck by a work train that was working in the yard and killed. And that’s kind of all we know,” said Allan Serwa, McLean’s brother-in-law and spokesperson for the grieving family.

Serwa said what’s baffling to the family is how this tragedy occurred considering there are so many procedures and regulations about “how to go from A to B anywhere in the railroad.”

Add to that the fact that McLean is a 30-year veteran of railway procedures, and was somebody who trained people in safety, and Serwa says you have to wonder how it happened.

“We have never seen any pictures or video but my sister was told by the coroner that it was very dark and a question that immediately popped up into my mind was, in a culture where we can light up a local ball diamond bright enough to play a night game, why is a rail yard that’s got 500 ton moving machines so pitch dark that you can’t see a couple of feet in front of your face?”

When contacted by the Record, CP Rail released the following written statements.

“CP can confirm there was a workplace fatality at our Port Coquitlam yard on December 2.

“The company’s deepest sympathies go out to the employee’s family, friends and colleagues. CP is offering counseling to the family and our employees through our Employee and Family Assistance Program.”
“A thorough investigation is underway into the incident. No further details are being released at this time.”

Serwa explained that it isn’t just CP Rail, but the Teamster Union, Transportation Canada and the Transportation Safety Board that are involved in the investigation.

When completed, the findings will be given to Worksafe BC and Serwa said it could take months before the family gets any answers.

“We are not trying to lay any blame on anybody, but we are curious as to how and why it happened.”

McLean lived in Mission for the past 22 years and was a well-known volunteer in his children’s school and later volunteering in the Mission Minor Hockey Association, assisting and later becoming a coach. He was a devoted family man who enjoyed spending time with his two sons, teaching them how to play baseball, to box, then later how to play hockey.

“Kirk was kind of a quiet, family-orientated guy. All of the railroad people that we talked to said ‘every time we were out on a run all he talked about was what his sons were doing,’” said Serwa.

He would also call his wife and talk to her during every trip.

“He was looking to retire in about a year and a half and with his two boys he wanted to get more involved in golfing and maybe another sport of some kind. And he was looking forward to those kind of things and that’s why it’s such a tragedy for everybody.”

A Celebration of Life will be held Thursday, Dec. 12, at the Best Western in Mission, from 4 p.m. until close.

Donations to Diabetes Canada would be appreciated by the family.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/RIPKirk

**Remembering Kirk McLean**

Kirk Charles McLean was a husband, father, mentor and coach. His love and dedication to his family was deep and abiding and his loss is felt in the community, across the nation and, most keenly, at home. Kirk passed away suddenly on Monday, December 2nd, 2019 in a tragic workplace accident.

He is survived by his wife Brenda and their two sons Devon and Jordan as well as his mother Adele Dunhill of Burlington, Ontario, the place of his birth. He is also survived by his sister Kim McQueen, brothers and sisters-in-law, as well as many cousins, nieces and nephews. Kirk was a Locomotive Engineer for CP Rail working out of Port Coquitlam where he dedicated 32 years of service.
Living in Mission, BC, for the last 22 years, he was a regular volunteer at his children’s school and at the local amateur Hockey Association, first assisting and later coaching. Kirk’s passion for hockey was well known. He spent many hours on the ice, coaching his sons and their teams. This invaluable contribution to the community continues as the players whose lives he touched carry on in the sport.

Known at home as the ‘Energizer Bunny,’ Kirk was a devoted family man who enjoyed spending time with his two sons, teaching them not only hockey but also baseball and boxing. Devon and Jordie were kind of famous at the railroad, as Kirk would regale his colleagues with a highlight reel of their lives on every trip. His pride and devotion couldn’t be more clear.

Kirk brought his unflagging energy to work as well. As a respected locomotive engineer, he was a mentor to many. You always knew you were in good hands when you worked with Kirk. His patience and generosity in passing on his knowledge have benefitted the conductors he worked with and the young engineers he trained. More than professionally, Kirk was a solid guy to have around. His good nature and wry sense of humour put everyone at ease from the booking in room to the bunkhouse, where you could find him in the gym or quietly catching up with his wife on the phone. The many fond stories of Kirk being shared around the railroad attest to his enduring presence.

This campaign has been created by Kirk’s friends and colleagues at Division 320 of the Teamsters Union to memorialize his passing and assist his family in this difficult time.

The funds raised by this worthy campaign will help offset the funeral expenses and shore up financial shortfalls caused by the sudden loss of Kirk’s income.

Thanks in advance for your generosity. Kirk, you will live on in our hearts and minds and in the skills and knowledge you passed on to us.