Authorities identify Amtrak employee killed in industrial accident in South Loop rail yard

The fatal accident happened about 7:20 p.m. Nov. 9 in the 1600 block of South Lumber Street.

By David Struett@dstru312 Updated Nov 20, 2019, 3:54pm CST

Authorities have identified an Amtrak employee who was killed earlier this month in an industrial accident at a South Loop Amtrak mechanical facility.

Christopher Blaess, 61, was killed in an industrial accident about 7:20 p.m. Nov. 9 in the 1600 block of South Lumber Street, according to the Cook County medical examiner’s office.

Officers responded to an injured person in a train depot at that location and found a critically injured man, Chicago police said.

Paramedics took him to Stroger Hospital, where Blaess was pronounced dead at 8:47 p.m., according to police and the medical examiner’s office. He lived in New Lenox.

An autopsy found he died of multiple blunt force injuries from an industrial accident, the medical examiner’s office said.

Amtrak police were investigating the death, Chicago police said.

“We are deeply saddened by the death of an Amtrak Mechanical employee on Saturday night at our Chicago mechanical facility,” Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said in an email. He declined to comment further.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has opened an investigation into Amtrak regarding the incident, according to U.S. Department of Labor spokesman Scott Allen.

Local lodge 2600 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers said in a Facebook post that Blaess died in a tragic accident.

“We wish our brother a peaceful rest, and he will be missed,” the lodge wrote.
We recently lost our brother Chris Blaess to a tragic accident. Per his wishes, he didn’t want a service and will be placed in a family plot in Joliet. He requested before he passed any money spent on flowers or anything of that nature be donated to Manteno Veterans Home, 1 Veterans Dr. Manteno, IL 60950.

We wish our brother a peaceful rest, and he will be missed.