

Second New York City transit worker killed in a week

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A New York City transit worker was killed on March 27 at a bus depot in Queens. The 59-year-old man, Stephen Livecchi, was directing traffic in the depot at about 10 AM when a bus operator, who failed to see him while driving in reverse, ran over him.

Livecchi, who had been on the job for 37 years, was pronounced dead at the scene, according to investigators. His sister-in-law, Clara Hunter, 52, told the *New York Daily News*, “We’re devastated. He was very much loved. He was a great role model to his two nephews. He took care of my two elderly parents.”

Livecchi, whose job title was helper-maintainer, performed a variety of jobs, including directing traffic. His death occurred at a time of day when there are many activities in the depot, according to officials.

The driver of the bus, who is 56 years old and has been on the job for 29 years, remained at the scene immediately after the accident and has not been charged.

Driving buses inside a depot is a specialized task. George Smith, a driver at the East New York depot, spoke about the nature of the work inside a depot. He told the *World Socialist Web Site*, “There is a traffic director here and it is as dangerous as they make it. There is a blind spot behind the bus. You are supposed to tap on the horn 3 times when you are backing up.”

He described the difficulties of the job in general. “The MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) people who make the route schedules for operators are crazy. That may sound too strong, but that is the way it is. There is no way you can make these trips on schedule.”

He explained that while sometimes they give a driver too much time to make a series of stops, more often than not they don’t allow enough time. Overall, they never give a bus operator sufficient time to complete a

scheduled run.

Investigators are now checking to see if the alarm that is supposed to make a beeping sound when a bus backs up was working. They will be examining the videos taken by the depot’s surveillance cameras.

Another bus driver bitterly complained about the lack of safety. He told the WSW, “They need to have cameras in the back of the buses where the operators can’t see. This is needed for safety. Maybe this safety measure will be adopted now. Every car has cameras in the back now. Why don’t the buses have cameras to see in the back?”

Another bus operator, Andrea, complained about the working conditions in general. She said, “You may do two round-trips and then have a break. You may do eight hours or you may do 12, but you must have eight hours between. Actually, we are all basically working 12 hours because you have to travel to and from work.”

One week before the March 27 accident, also on a Tuesday morning, a track worker for only six months, St. Clair Richards Stephens, 23, was killed when a wooden safety railing broke, causing him to plunge 20 feet. The number of New York City transit workers killed on the job since 2014 is now five. Considering the unsafe conditions facing transit workers, it is fortunate that the number is not higher.



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