

The workplace carnage continues: New York City worker killed in explosion on sewage boat

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Raymond Feige, a 59-year-old Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) worker, was killed and two others injured Saturday, May 24, in an explosion on a sewage boat on the Hudson River in New York City. The vessel was docked in the North River Wastewater Resource Recovery Facility near 138th Street in West Harlem when an explosion ripped through its hull around 10:30 am Saturday.

New York City Fire Department Deputy Assistant Chief David Simms said Feige, “was blown by the force of the explosion in between the pier and the vessel, itself,” according to CBS News.

First responders found Feige unconscious in the river, the police said, and he was declared dead at the scene. Another worker on the city-owned M/V (Motorized Vessel) *Hunts Point* was taken to the hospital while a third refused medical treatment.

Feige, who worked for the city for 33 years, was well respected by his coworkers. A visitation was held Wednesday, May 28, 2025, according to an obituary.

On May 26, a co-worker posted this message on his Facebook page:

On this Memorial Day, my thoughts and prayers are with the Feige Family.

Just two days ago, we lost Raymond Feige, a dedicated DEP Chief Marine Engineer, in a tragic incident aboard the *M/V Hunts Point* while on the job. It's not easy hearing that someone you worked with alongside has passed away especially in the line of duty.

Ray was respected, hardworking, and took pride in his craft. a guy who gave his all every single day.

Rest in peace, Ray. You won't be forgotten!

A statement from the Department of Environmental Protection said Feige started in the marine section of DEP in 1991 and remained there his whole career. “Ray was a respected engineer and a steady, beloved colleague who will be

deeply missed,” DEP Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala said in a statement.

“For more than three decades he worked at DEP in a job that is largely unseen by most New Yorkers but is critical to keeping the city running, and we are grateful for service. Please continue to keep Ray’s family and colleagues in your thoughts during this difficult time.”

Department officials said the marine section was “his home away from home” and his “bond with his shipmates and love of working on the water kept him committed to the fleet for more than three decades.”

The 290-foot *M/V Hunts Point*, which was completed at Louisiana’s Bollinger Shipyards in 2013, hauls raw sewage from the city to the waste water treatment facility in Upper Manhattan. It was docked near the facility when the blast occurred.

New York City’s Democratic mayor, Eric Adams, who has carried out savage budget cuts to city services, released a perfunctory statement, claiming he was “devastated to hear about the tragic death.”

Neither District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) nor AFSCME Local 3599, the union DEP workers belong to, appears to have issued any public statements on Feige’s tragic death.

Although the cause of the explosion has not yet been determined there are already attempts by the media to shift the blame onto the victim himself, with the pro-Trump *New York Post* posting a May 26 article with the slanderous headline: “Top NYC engineer’s welding may have sparked methane on sewage boat, killing him in blast.”

Citing unnamed “sources,” the right-wing gutter newspaper wrote:

A top city Environmental Protection engineer killed in a weekend sewage-boat explosion may have accidentally blown himself up by welding near methane, sources told The Post on Monday.

An investigation into the death of Raymond Feige, 59, preliminarily found he had been welding on the sludge vessel before the blast Saturday, sources said.

Shortly after the explosion, the US Coast Guard tweeted that the blast was “linked to hot work [processes that produce flames or sparks] aboard a dock boat.” But even if preliminary reports indicate that a welding torch may have ignited methane gases from the raw sewage that had been built up in the tight spaces of the ship—and none of this has been substantiated yet—the suggestion that Feige was responsible for his own death is aimed at preempting any serious investigation and exonerating city officials of any responsibility.

Many questions have yet to be posed, let alone answered. Was the incident the result of violation of safety regulations on the part of the city? Why was the methane gas not safely contained? Was Feige, a highly skilled and experienced worker who must be aware of such safety questions, pressured to finish a job by management? What measures are being taken to ensure something like this will not happen again?

City workers cannot trust any official investigation by the city and state authorities, including the NYPD and the AFSCME bureaucracy. Instead, rank-and-file workers should initiate their own investigation into this wholly preventable death and take the necessary measures to protect their own safety.

The death of Feige takes place against the backdrop of the gutting of essential social programs and regulatory agencies by the Trump administration. According to CNN, at least 121,000 federal jobs have been eliminated as of April 29 since Trump took office in January. These include officials from agencies responsible for ensuring safe working conditions, such as the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Four hundred employees at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) were dismissed even as there has been a surge in plane crashes over the past several months. These cuts will inevitably and have already led to countless preventable deaths and injuries.

The death of Feige, moreover, is only the latest in an unending series of deadly workplace accidents caused by cost-cutting measures designed to maximize profits for corporations at the expense of the lives and safety of workers, while the union bureaucracies, regulatory agencies, and capitalist press cover for the companies. According to the AFL-CIO, 140,000 workers die annually from hazardous working conditions, including more than 3,200 from traumatic on-the-job injuries and 135,000 from exposures to deadly chemicals and other toxins.

On April 7, 2025, Ronald Adams Sr., a machine repairman, was crushed to death by a crane while performing maintenance work at Stellantis’ Dundee Engine Complex in southeast Michigan.

In the more than seven weeks since the fatal accident, Adams’ family and co-workers have not received any substantial information about the causes of the 63-year-old worker’s death from the company, the United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy or the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA). As of this writing, the Washtenaw County Medical Examiner has not even released its autopsy findings and the official cause of death.

In order to prevent another whitewash of corporate murder, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) has launched an independent investigation, to be led by rank-and-file workers, to uncover the truth and hold those responsible to account.

An inquiry independent of Stellantis, the UAW apparatus and state authorities is essential to expose systemic safety violations and prevent future deaths. It must gather testimony from Dundee workers, autoworkers at other plants, safety experts and others with relevant knowledge. Such a workers’ investigation is crucial to laying the basis for genuine rank-and-file oversight over safety and production conditions in the factories.

Workers must unite across the public and private sector in every industry to demand safe working conditions and livable wages. The first step in this fight is supporting the investigation into the death of Ronald Adams. Through this campaign workers must fight to uncover the truth about Adam’s death, as well as safety conditions affecting workers at plants and workplaces throughout the country, and take production into their own hands. This is the only way to ensure that the lives of workers like Ronald Adams, Raymond Feige and countless others are no longer sacrificed to private profit.

To support the rank-and-file investigation into the death of Ronald Adams Sr. and other workers, fill out the form below.



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