

Two construction workers killed in Florida crane collapse: The latest victims of America's industrial slaughterhouse

Jerry White
4 June 2025

Two construction workers were killed Wednesday afternoon when a large crane collapsed at a central Florida building site, burying them under twisted steel, concrete and other debris. The crane snapped amid heavy rains and winds gusting up to 53 miles an hour at the construction site for the new Cape Canaveral Hospital, located on Merritt Island, on Florida's Space Coast.

Video posted to social media showed the aftermath, with the mangled boom of the giant crane on the ground as construction workers fled for their safety.

The two workers were pulled from the wreckage by emergency crews, rushed to a nearby hospital, and pronounced dead shortly after arrival, according to first responders. Brevard County Sheriff's Office spokesman Tod Goodyear said the identities of the victims have not been made public, pending notification of their families.

At the time of the disaster, the National Weather Service office in Melbourne issued a special weather statement warning of strong winds and advising people to seek shelter in a sturdy structure as a line of storms moved through the area. The region has been under a "tropical envelope for days," Fox Weather channel reported, adding that the string of wet weather "likely resulted in unsteady terrain."

But the conditions were apparently deemed not too dangerous for the construction management company, Gilbane Building, to halt operations. Construction began in March 2024 on the new \$410 million Cape Canaveral Hospital and Medical Office Building on Merritt Island. The 267,900-square-foot facility, owned by Florida-based Health First, is expected to be open in 2027. A local news station noted, "Due to the future

hospital's proximity to the coastline, the medical center is being built to withstand the strength of a Category 4 hurricane."

One commenter on the Facebook page of the local station wrote, "So very sad. Thoughts & prayers for the families. The winds got so high at times today that I don't even understand why they were out in it."

Another posted: "How horrible, poor workers may their families find strength during this difficult time." Another added, "And, Trump wants to get rid of OSHA."

The site has reportedly been sealed as inspectors from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and state regulators began their investigation. In a statement, Health First referred to a "serious weather-related incident at the Cape Canaveral Hospital construction site involving a crane," and added that it was "monitoring the situation closely with local authorities and Gilbane, the construction management company on the project, as they continue their investigation."

A Gilbane Building spokesman said, "Two trade contract workers, one employed by Baker Concrete and the other by another trade contractor, were fatally injured as a result of an incident involving a crane. We share our deepest condolences with the families, loved ones, and co-workers."

Several previous cases of crane collapses highlight how strong winds can be a significant factor, especially when safety protocols related to wind speeds and crane operation are not strictly followed.

These include:

- The Miller Park "Big Blue" Collapse (Milwaukee, 1999): This incident, involving a very large crane

lifting a stadium roof section, was directly linked to high winds exceeding the crane's rated capacity, despite concerns raised by workers on site.

- Dallas Crane Collapse (2019): A tower crane tipped over during a thunderstorm, crashing into an apartment building and causing fatalities and injuries. Investigations indicated the crane, though designed for strong winds, may not have been properly prepared for the predicted weather conditions.

- Fort Lauderdale Crane Crash (2024): A tower crane collapsed during a “stepping” operation (increasing its height) due to unsafe rigging and coordination issues, although this event also involved wind.

This is not just a national issue. In July 2021, a crane collapsed at a downtown Kelowna, British Columbia building site in Canada killing five people. That same year, crane operators in South Korea went on strike following a string of worksite accidents.

The US construction industry experienced the most workplace deaths in 2023, the latest year available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), followed by transportation and warehousing. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting had the highest death rate per 100,000.

In 2023, 1,075 construction workers died in the United States, marking the highest number of fatalities in the sector since 2011, BLS reported. The leading causes of death in construction are falls, struck-by objects, caught-in/between incidents, and electrocutions, collectively known as the “Fatal Four.” Falls to a lower level were the most common cause of death, accounting for 39.2 percent of all construction fatalities.

The two construction workers are only the latest to be sacrificed for corporate profit in America's industrial slaughterhouse. According to the AFL-CIO, over 140,000 workers die each year in the US from hazardous working conditions—more than 5,000 from traumatic injuries and the rest from occupational diseases like cancer, respiratory illness and heart failure. That is more than 380 preventable deaths every day.

Yet with fewer than 1,800 federal and state safety inspectors overseeing 11 million workplaces, there is just one inspector for every 85,000 workers, with OSHA spending about \$3.92 to protect each worker in America.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) has initiated an independent investigation into the death of Ronald Adams Sr., a 63-year-old machine repairman who was killed at the Stellantis Dundee Engine Complex in Michigan on April 7. In the nearly two months since the tragedy, Adams' family and coworkers have received no information about the causes and circumstances behind the fatal accident.

A video posted by socialist autoworker Will Lehman on TikTok supporting the rank-and-file investigation into Adams' death garnered enormous support, with over 98,000 views, 28,000 likes, and 995 comments as of this writing. The hundreds of comments from workers and their families in support of the investigation demonstrate the universal experience of workers in the United States and around the world with preventable injuries and deaths caused by the relentless drive for corporate profit.

The IWA-RFC's investigation is aimed not only at uncovering the truth about the death of Ronald Adams Sr., but also at assisting workers in building rank-and-file committees, independent of the pro-corporate union bureaucracies, so that they can exert control over safety conditions in every factory and workplace.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact