

Ford worker Gregory Knopf killed at Sharonville Transmission Plant in Ohio

Our Reporters
18 March 2026

Gregory Knopf, a 64-year-old worker at Ford Motor Company's Sharonville Transmission Plant in Ohio, was killed on Monday, March 16, after a press machine activated while undergoing routine maintenance and pinned him against equipment. First responders freed Knopf and transported him to Bethesda North Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He is survived by his wife, three children and eight grandchildren.

In comments to the local media, Knopf's son Corey described his father as the best man he knew. His daughter Miranda Boutwell remembered him as selfless. "My dad was always willing to help anybody in need," she said. "I wish he would be around to see the rest of my life, but I know that he will be proud, and I know that he is proud."

An obituary posted online states: "A lifelong resident of the greater Cincinnati area, Greg built a life centered on faith, family, and hard work. He was a skilled plumber and pipe fitter who took pride in his craft and the work of his hands."

According to the Sharonville Police Department, officers responded to the plant at approximately 9:45 a.m. The press machine, during routine service, turned on. Police said there were multiple witnesses.

The Hamilton County Coroner's Office, OSHA, and Ford's administrative staff have all opened investigations into the incident. Ford issued a perfunctory statement claiming that "safety is our highest priority."

The circumstances of Knopf's death bear a grim resemblance to a pattern of workplace fatalities across the auto industry. Just over 11 months ago, 63-year-old Ronald Adams Sr. was killed at the Stellantis Dundee Engine Plant in Monroe County, Michigan, when an overhead gantry crushed him while he serviced equipment.

An independent investigation conducted by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees found evidence of routine bypassing of lockout/tagout procedures and accelerated production schedules.

The US Department of Labor reported that 5,070 workers were killed on the job in 2024, a figure that vastly understates the true toll because it excludes most deaths from workplace-related illness. The AFL-CIO estimates that occupational disease claimed 135,000 lives in 2023 alone.

Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker running for UAW president in 2026, issued a statement on Knopf's death connecting it directly to the death of Ronald Adams Sr. and the broader failure of the UAW apparatus to defend workers' lives. "These deaths are the predictable, preventable product of a system that treats workers as expendable inputs to production," Lehman wrote in the statement posted on his website.

Lehman indicted the union leadership's conduct following Adams' death as a template for what workers should expect now. "In the eleven months since Ronald Adams Sr. was killed, Shawn Fain's apparatus has issued no statement demanding accountability from Stellantis, made no public demands of MIOSHA, and moved as quickly as possible to restore production at Dundee Engine," he wrote. "The UAW bureaucracy's silence over the death of Ronald Adams Sr. tells workers everything they need to know about what to expect following the death of Gregory Knopf."

Lehman's statement called for rank-and-file workers to wrest control of workplace safety from both management and the union bureaucracy. "We cannot defend our lives while we are bound hand and foot by a union apparatus that stands against us at every turn," he wrote, calling for the establishment of democratically

controlled rank-and-file safety committees with real authority to halt unsafe operations, enforce lockout/tagout procedures and conduct independent investigations.

Lehman also made a direct appeal to workers with knowledge of the conditions at Sharonville. “If you work at the Sharonville Transmission Plant or anywhere in the Ford network and have information about the conditions that led to Gregory Knopf’s death, I urge you to contact my campaign,” he wrote. “Workers cannot forgive and forget what is being done to our brothers and sisters. We will not let these deaths be forgotten.”

The Sharonville plant, which produces transmissions, is one of Ford’s major Ohio manufacturing facilities. As of publication, neither Ford nor the UAW had announced any further steps beyond the investigations already underway.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact