



Operating Engineers Union wants answers, 4-year delay in justice for Kelowna crane collapse victims

IUOE Local 115 urges BC Prosecution to pursue justice

BURNABY, BC – Four years have passed since a tragic tower crane collapse in Kelowna claimed the lives of five workers: Cailen Vilness, Jared Zook, Brad Zawislak, Patrick Stemmer, and Eric Stemmer.

Today we join the family in mourning their loss and continue to demand justice for their families.

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 115, representing hundreds of crane operators across British Columbia, is urgently calling on the BC Prosecution Service to proceed with a criminal trial and deliver justice to the victims' families.

The union that represents hundreds of crane operators and workers that erect, climb, reposition, and dismantle tower cranes across B.C. is, calling on the BC Prosecution to proceed with a criminal trial and deliver justice for the families of the victims.

Bryan Railton, Business Manager of IUOE Local 115, expresses his profound sadness regarding the delay: "It is incredibly sad that as we approach the four-year anniversary of this terrible industrial tragedy, the families are no closer to seeing justice for their loved ones, and the industry is no closer to understanding what happened that day."

The union emphasizes concerns for both workers and the public who remain unsettled by the lack of answers. Business Manager Railton noted, "Our members, like many in the public find themselves, increasingly frustrated because there is no conclusion to this deadly incident and no reason why it couldn't happen again."

Pushing WorkSafeBC for the results of their investigation

Since the 2021 Kelowna collapse, British Columbia has experienced four more tower crane incidents.

Josh Towsley, Assistant Business Manager of IUOE Local 115, reiterated the union's commitment to securing answers and better protecting the industry. "My heart goes out to the families of the victims, and that is why our organization is steadfast in not giving up on pursuing

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justice for them. We need the BC Prosecution Service to hold people accountable for decisions that led to this tragic loss of life."

Sixteen months ago, the Kelowna RCMP recommended that the BC Prosecution Service pursue a charge of criminal negligence causing death in connection with the collapse. To date, there has been no public update on this recommendation.

"WorkSafeBC completed their investigation nearly two years ago and the results have remained hidden from the public and industry. As labour advocates, we demand the release of the WorkSafeBC report so we can continue to better protect our members and the public from future tragedies," says Towsley.

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 115 is a craft trade union representing more than 14,000 skilled workers in construction, road building, transportation, mining, aviation, and various industrial sectors throughout British Columbia and the Yukon.

MEDIA CONTACT

Jared Fisk, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 115
PH: 604-341-8321 E: jfisk@iuoe115.ca