

Construction death was avoidable

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By CRAIG PIECHURA
 Last Friday's fatal crane accident in Canton—the second construction-related tragedy to hit a Livonia family in six years—could have been prevented if federally-mandated safety standards had been fully followed by the construction crew, says an investigator from the Michigan Department of Labor.

"At this time—and remember these are only allegations, they have not been cited for any violation—it would appear that some violations of code were committed," said Rich Julin, assistant chief of construction safety for the state department of labor.

"Number one, it appears that they were not guarding the area around the crane. Under state code it is supposed to be barricaded so no one can get near."

Officials of Acitelli and Peterman Poured Wall Co. of Farmington were out of the office Tuesday afternoon and unavailable for comment on the safety investigation.

But Kenneth Kennedy, father of 23-year-old Chuck Kennedy who was crushed to death in the crane accident Friday in the Sunflower subdivision, works as a crane operator for Acitelli and Peterman Kennedy, of Livonia, says he has never heard of the regu-

lation requiring a barricade around the path of a crane counterweight.

THE REASON MANY crane operators and construction companies are not aware of the barricade requirement, said a state investigator, is that it only became law in Michigan Jan. 1, 1976 due to federally-mandated regulations.

Julin also admitted that the transient nature of home construction contractors makes it tough for state inspectors to check out the numerous job sites.

"A company involved in house work will not see us that often," Julin said. "They're here one day pouring a basement and they're in another city the next day. We don't get there that often to observe every individual job site. We've got eight people covering the southeast corner of Michigan. I'm not trying to make excuses, it's just a matter of fact."

Whenever a construction fatality occurs, the Michigan Department of Labor construction safety division conducts a field investigation. Don Phillips of the construction safety division visited the Canton job site Saturday and Monday but has not yet submitted his findings.

State investigators did not rule out

the possibility of writing up violations against the company.

KENNETH KENNEDY said he is convinced his son's death was the result of "a stupid accident" and any further investigation is being done without his encouragement.

"The only time I've ever used a barricade around a crane is when we're working near an open trench," Kennedy said. "I've never heard of that rule and I've been with the company for eight years."

"It was just a stupid accident," Kennedy continued. "You've got to watch what you're doing when you're working around machinery. We still don't know how it happened but accidents do happen."

"I know a fellow got his leg pinched this summer at a job I was working at," he recalled. "I thought he was off the machine but he was riding on the back of it."

Kennedy explained that a builder approached him Friday while he was working at an east-side suburb to inform him, for the second time, that a son of his had been killed in a crane accident.

In 1971, Kennedy's oldest son, Doug, died at age 19 when he was standing next to a crane that was struck by

lightning. At that time, Kennedy was working at the same job site.

"Despite the double tragedy, Kennedy said he doesn't think the construction field is "any more dangerous than that of steergagers, factory workers or carpenters."

Still, Kennedy and his wife, Ellen, vinticed when a younger son spoke up Tuesday to say he wanted to be a construction worker like his father.

"If you do, you'll work inside the crane, not outside like Doug or Chuck," said Mrs. Kennedy.

Larkshire fair sets record

Larkshire Elementary School's recent fair topped all records for attendance, participation and funds raised.

The Parent-Teacher Association sponsored event raised more than \$2,400, beating last year's record of \$2,200. Proceeds will be used to purchase popular and educational media kits, according to publicity chairperson Suzanne Miller.

"It was a huge success with a great many attending and thoroughly enjoying themselves," Ms. Miller says.

The Larkshire PTA has purchased many items for the school with past fair proceeds, including a mimeograph machine; 500 paperback books; 300 hardcover books; 32 media kits; records; a glass showcase; movie projector; eight millimeter films; a tape copier; a television; TV and audio-visual carts; two film copiers; a trampoline; climbing bars; two sets of encyclopedias; and kindergarten play equipment.

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