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## Truck driver killed at Port of LB

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**LONG BEACH** - A 40-year-old truck driver and father of three was killed Wednesday night when he was struck by a forklift and pinned between two chassis at the Port of Long Beach, authorities said Thursday.

Pablo Garcia Lopez was hit just before 8 p.m. Wednesday on Pier A, where he had been dispatched to pick up a container, officials said.

Long Beach Fire Department paramedics were summoned to the dock at 7:36 p.m. and rushed Lopez to a local hospital, where he died from massive internal injuries.

Long Beach police were called out to investigate the death, along with investigators from Cal-OSHA, said Nancy Pratt, a Long Beach Police Department spokeswoman.

The LBPD's Accident Investigation detective assigned to the incident will file the case with the City Prosecutor's Office next week. It will be up to that office to determine whether charges are brought against the forklift operator, Pratt said.

The name of the forklift driver was not released and police released no details, although a

briefing on the incident from the Chief of Police's Office said the victim was killed after he was hit by a forklift driver who was moving a chassis and the victim became trapped between that chassis and another chassis.

Lopez, a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, had recently helped negotiate a labor contract between the union and his employer, Long Beach-based trucking firm Maritech Leasing.

The agreement provided, for him and co-workers, access to overtime pay, health benefits, a retirement plan and death compensation.

Chuck Mack, a Teamster organizer, said the union plans to launch a fundraising drive for Lopez's family in coming days and would push for an investigation of the accident.

"We don't intend to let this incident go unnoticed like it may have in the past," Mack said. "Working down on the waterfront is a dangerous job whether you're a longshoreman or a truck driver, but it doesn't have to be deadly."

The death is the first fatality in the port complex this year.

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