

Fatal accident closes NY-NJ port's Global terminal

Hugh Morley, Senior Editor | Apr 21, 2016 1:28PM EDT



The truck line outside Global Container Terminal around the time of the accident.

NEWARK, New Jersey — Global Container Terminal on the Jersey City-Bayonne, N.J. border closed mid-morning Thursday and will stay closed throughout the day, after a tractor-trailer struck two people standing alongside a line of trucks, killing a driver and injuring a second man.

The incident occurred at about 10.50 a.m. EST, according to the [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#), whose police department is investigating the case.

One victim was dead when authorities arrived, and the second was “conscious and alert” when authorities got to the scene. He was taken to Jersey City Medical Center with a rib fracture and an injury to the pelvis, the Port Authority said.

“It’s a combination of where it happened and the seriousness of it,” said Port Authority Spokesman Joseph Pentangelo, explaining the closure. “It’s a fatality and it has to be investigated.”

Late Thursday, Pentangelo said there had been no arrests or summonses issued, and the investigation into what happened was ongoing. The authority declined to identify the victims, but said the deceased driver was a 53 year old truck driver from Brooklyn, N.Y.

Several sources said the accident occurred inside the terminal next to a line of trucks waiting to pick up containers on the terminal's automated container-handling system. Pentangelo said preliminary information showed the men were hit by a chassis.

Edisson Villacis, who runs a Facebook page with news for port drivers, said the victims were standing talking by a line of trucks, where the wait was 2 hours to 3 hours. He said someone else's truck moved and one of the victims managed to take evasive action, but the other didn't.

The victims were hit by a truck driven by independent contractor working for West End Express, a Dayton, N.J. drayage company with about 60 trucks working for it.

Mark Wismer, safety director at the company, said it is still unclear what happened, in part because the company's driver had not been released by police late Thursday.

He said the driver was in line to pick up a container with an empty chassis, and he moved forward as the line did. "They weren't supposed to be there," he said of the victims. He and others said it appeared that the two victims were run over by the chassis wheels because they were standing inside the narrow part of the chassis, which is in line with the wheels.

Wismer declined to identify the driver.

"He is a valued contractor," he said. "He has been with us for seven or eight years and has a good record. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time."

GCT issued a statement saying: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased driver and those involved in the incident"

"We are supporting the authorities with their investigation," John Atkins, president of GCT USA, said