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Worker dies a day after recent accident at Wolfspeed headquarters in Durham

BY BRIAN GORDON

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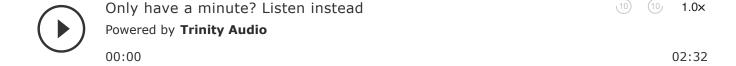








An American flag flies above Wolfspeed prior to a visit by President Joe Biden on Tuesday, March 28, 2023, in Durham, N.C. KAITLIN MCKEOWN *kmckeown@newsobserver.com*



The worker <u>injured last week</u> at the headquarters of the Durham semiconductor firm Wolfspeed died the day after the incident, the N.C. Department of Labor confirmed to The News & Observer.

The department did not release the name of the worker, a contractor employed by the Raleigh-based Southern Industrial Constructors, Inc. The state is currently investigating the firm for the workplace accident, now categorized as a fatality, which occurred on July 17.

Wolfspeed is not a subject of the state investigation.

"At this time, details are not available," a Southern Industrial Constructors representative told The N&O last week.

The state will release more information about the incident following its investigation, which typically takes months to conclude.

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This is the second open investigation into Southern Industrial, as regulators also look into an April 14 accident outside Columbia, South Carolina, which killed a 57year-old employee. The worker was discovered pinned between machinery at a tire-manufacturing site.

In 2012, Southern Industrial was acquired by EMCOR Group, a publicly traded construction company based in Connecticut which employs around 32,000 people nationwide.

SECOND FATAL ACCIDENT AT RTP HEADQUARTERS

Construction routinely ranks as the deadliest sector in North Carolina.

According to labor department data, the industry has had the most workplace fatalities in the state during the fiscal years of 2021, 2022 and so far in 2023 —

accounting for 57 of the state's 198 workplace deaths during this period.

Last week's accident was initially recorded as a hospitalization before the state relabeled it a fatality. Compared to workplace injuries, deaths typically attract "a more thorough investigation," said Jon Wallace, a safety consultant based in Chapel Hill who also teaches occupational safety at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The July 17 incident was the second fatal accident to occur within the past 10 months at the Wolfspeed headquarters. In October, a 45-year-old Wolfspeed employee named Vincent Farrell was fatally electrocuted after making contact with a live wire.

In April, the state cited the company for a pair of safety violations in relation to the incident. Wolfspeed told the labor department it adjusted multiple aspects of its safety protocols following Farrell's death.

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