

BNSF worker killed in Minneapolis switching accident

(The following appeared on the Minneapolis Star-Tribune website on December 29, 2009.)

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — A Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway employee was killed in Minneapolis on Tuesday when a rail car jumped its tracks and pinned him against a building, an official said.

The victim, 44-year-old Sam W. Lundy, had worked for the railway for 17 years, said company spokesman Steve Forsberg. Lundy is survived by a wife and three children, Forsberg said.

"It's an unfortunate tragedy," Forsberg said. "The BNSF Railway extends its deepest sympathies to his family and his co-workers."

The accident occurred about 11:30 a.m. as workers performed a routine switching operation, dropping off loaded cars at a customer facility, Forsberg said. The accident happened at NE. 37th St. and E. River Road.

Lundy was standing on the ground behind a six-car train, using a remote device to move it backward, when the last rail car left the tracks and pinned him against the building, said Minneapolis police spokesman Sgt. Jesse Garcia. Lundy was pronounced dead at the scene.

Another person was in the engine compartment at the time. There were no other injuries. Garcia and Forsberg said it's unclear what caused the car to derail.

The company experienced a few fatalities this year in its American Southwest locations, Forsberg said, adding that although safety is a priority, it is still a "potentially dangerous" work environment.