

ROBERT MENENDEZ
NEW JERSEY

COMMITTEES:
BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN
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FOREIGN RELATIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3004
December 10, 2007

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Mr. Edwin G. Foulke, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
Occupational Safety & Health Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary Foulke:

I write regarding a tragic – and likely avoidable – incident that occurred in Linden, New Jersey last weekend. Two New Jersey laundry workers were found dead at the North East Linen laundry facility in a tank they were cleaning. I am deeply concerned about reports that two New Jersey workers, Victor Diaz and Carlos Diaz, were found in a storage tank exposed to chemical fumes without any protective equipment, and that the workers may have been undertaking a task not usually assigned to them. Both workers had been cleaning the tank and according to the Linden police department, suffocated from inhaling dangerous chemicals.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) standards on such potentially lethal situations, where workers are required to work in confined spaces, are clear and simple. Any work that involves exposure to chemicals such as industrial laundry facilities requires a high safety standard and a serious commitment to training. It appears that this may have not been the case in this instance.

I respectfully request that OSHA conduct a comprehensive and thorough investigation into this tragic incident and determine what, if any, negligence may have led to this accident. I trust that OSHA will do its due diligence to ensure that workers at the North East Linen company are not at risk, and that our workers can have the confidence that our government is looking out for their safety. I look forward to your prompt and favorable response.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator