

October 21, 2015



Robert "Bob" Honomichl, 55

~ 8/13/2013 ~

City of Minden, Nebraska

*By: Trina Honomichl*

My name is Trina Honomichl and on August 11, 2013 my husband Robert "Bob" Honomichl worked for the City of Minden of Minden, Nebraska. On this day he went down into a lift station to pick up a few rags so they wouldn't clog the station up again.

My husband became overcome with toxic gas fumes and became disoriented at which time his boss went down to bring him out and he as well became overcome by the gas fumes. At that time the lift station started filling with sewer again at which time both men were trapped for approximately 30 minutes until help arrived. They pulled Bob's boss out first believing he may have been in the worse shape out of the two of them. He was taken to the hospital were thankfully he survived his physical injuries. A short time after they got Bob out, he was then taken to local hospital as he could not breathe well, once he was believed to be stable he was transported to Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, Nebraska. My husband was then put in an

induced coma and was on a respirator where he succumbed to his injuries on August 13, 2013.

Sadly, there was no safety equipment purchased prior to or after the incident that took my husband from us because the City could not afford the safety equipment and believes that outsourcing the job from this point forward would be more cost effective for the City of Minden.

No one ever came to investigate the incident that took my husband from me and my family, not OSHA and/or the local Police Department. To this day my husband's death has never been investigated, leaving me with many unanswered questions.

I waited a year thinking someone would come and investigate the incident that forever has changed my life. I finally called OSHA myself and that's when I learned that OSHA had no jurisdiction and could not investigate this work related fatality. Without the complete investigation process it has left my family with a lot of unanswered questions . We believe that any work related injury and/or fatality should be thoroughly investigated and inspected by the proper organization giving the families the closure in which they deserve and also making sure that the employers are aware of the cause of the injury or fatality so that they can complete the safety changes needed to make sure that incidents such as this do not occur again and that their other employees are safe while at work.

I have found out that I am not alone as there are approximately 8-10 million public workers in the United States that do not have a right to a safe workplace, and many workers like my husband that do not receive an investigation of their work related injury or work incidents and this is not right. All workers should be guaranteed a safe workplace not at the expense of a co-worker or family member.