

# Beaumont man's family files wrongful death suit against port contractors

By Manuella Libardi Updated 9:20 am, Thursday, July 30, 2015



The family of a 20-year-old construction worker killed last month in an accident at the Port of Beaumont filed a wrongful death lawsuit on Wednesday against the contractors leasing the terminal.

The suit, filed by Beaumont-based Bernsen Law Firm, claims the contractors negligently built an "inherently dangerous crane" from a modified boom truck crane.

Landon Russell, a 2013 West Brook High School graduate, was loading crude oil from rail cars onto barges on June 26 at a site on the Orange County side of the Neches River. Russell, a contract worker for Jefferson Energy Companies, was fatally crushed by the crane, according to the suit, brought on behalf of Russell's parents, Tara Latil and George Russell.

The amended suit names the defendants in the case as Jefferson Refinery, LLC.; Jefferson Energy Companies; Fortress Transportation and Infrastructure Investors, LLC.; and Fortress Investment Group.

The defendants engineered and built a five-level structure about 40 or 50 feet tall, called a Dock-OC3, and mounted a crane on top of the structure to facilitate the loading and unloading of oil products, the suit alleges.

The suit contends that the pedestal holding the crane in place was too low, allowing the crane to fatally crush Russell between the boom and a rail at the top of the 50-foot tall structure.

"Defendants' improper installation and design of the OC3 with the modified boom truck crane created a crush point that caused (Russell's) death," according to the suit.

The suit further contends the contractors installed a remote control with antenna to operate the modified crane, which failed to respond.

"Defendants' altered crane configuration and installation were and are inherently dangerous," the suit alleges.

Attorney David Bernsen sent a letter to David Fisher, Port of Beaumont director, requesting that use of the structure and crane he believes caused Russell's death to be suspended until safety measures are taken.



John Roby, director of public affairs for the Port of Beaumont, declined to comment on the suit but confirmed Fisher received the letter.

Attorneys are seeking a jury trial and restitution for medical expenses, funeral expenses, pain, suffering and mental anguish.

<http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/news/article/Beaumont-man-s-family-files-wrongful-death-suit-6413438.php#photo-8381179>



[MLibardi@BeaumontEnterprise.com](mailto:MLibardi@BeaumontEnterprise.com)

[Twitter.com/ManuellaLibardi](https://twitter.com/ManuellaLibardi)

© 2016 Hearst Communications, Inc.  
**HEARST**