

\$10.6M settlement awarded to truck driver who lost legs in accident at Duquesne pipe yard

TOM DAVIDSON

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A Mercer man who had portions of both legs amputated six years ago after they were crushed in a Christmas Eve accident at a Duquesne pipe yard will receive a nearly \$10.6 million settlement, attorneys announced Wednesday.

Robert R. Ryder, 59, was a truck driver dropping off a load of eight, 42-foot-long steel pipe on Dec. 24, 2013, at the Dura-Bond Coating Inc. pipe yard in Duquesne when one of them rolled off the truck as a Dura-Bond employee was unloading them.

The pipe weighed 5,000 pounds and pinned his legs, according to the lawsuit Ryder filed in Allegheny County court. In the lawsuit, Ryder claimed Dura-Bond failed to properly inspect the cargo and secure the load after receiving it.

“This was not his fault,” said one of Ryder’s attorneys, **Dominic Guerrini of Philadelphia-based Kline & Specter.**

Guerrini accused Dura-Bond employees of making mistakes that caused and compounded his injuries.

“This settlement demonstrates that rigorous workplace safety policies and practices are not optional,” Guerrini said.

Dura-Bond officials didn’t respond to requests seeking comment. The employee who was unloading the pipe wasn’t identified in the lawsuit.



The Fusion epoxy mill at the Dura-Bond Coating facility

A man who answered a number listed for Ryder hung up when asked for comment about the settlement.

Ryder had been a truck driver for 25 years and was working for Yourga Trucking Inc., a Mercer County-based company that hauls steel and pipe across the region. Ryder had been hauling the load from Camden, N.J., to the Dura-Bond yard in Duquesne.

The load wasn't inspected when Ryder arrived, according to the lawsuit. Had it been, the problem with the load — it was off-center — would have been discovered, the lawsuit alleged. Instead, Ryder was allowed to stand next to his truck while it was unloaded, and his legs were crushed when one of the pipe fell, according to the lawsuit.

Ryder hasn't been able to work since the accident.

The eight-figure settlement reflects the severity of Ryder's injuries and how it's impacted his life, Guerrini said.

Dura-Bond Coating Inc. is based in Export and has locations in Duquesne, McKeesport and Steelton. It produces pipe used in oil and gas industry, particularly in the Marcellus shale region.