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DAILY NEWS

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TWU Forces Emergency Hearing on Track Safety

Track worker safety talks set

THE TRANSPORT Workers Union and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority are clashing over protections for vulnerable track workers following the death of a construction flagger in November, the labor group's chief said.

Both sides are slated to hash it out at an emergency arbitration hearing Friday. TWU Local 100 chief John Samuelsen said he'll press the MTA to require yellow lanterns at platform edges to warn motormen that track

EXCLUSIVE

workers are setting up safety zones. In the meantime, as federal investigators look into the deadly accident, Samuelsen (photo) said his goal is an extra platform worker to have a "face-to-face conversation" with motormen.

Construction flagger Louis Gray was crushed to death by a train turning a curve on the F

and G line in Brooklyn on Nov. 3. A colleague was injured.

"There is no current protocol to protect workers in that particular circumstance, where they are setting up flagging lanterns in a curve with the train operator having no knowledge that they're out there," Samuelsen said. MTA spokeswoman Beth DeFalco declined to comment on negotiations with the union.



Dan Rivoli

JAMES KEVON/DAILY NEWS

Louis Gray died because of a dangerous gap in MTA safety rules for when transit workers are on or along the subway tracks - and train service is still in effect. Gray was setting up cautionary lights for a scheduled construction project but train operators heading into that section of track - a curve - had no warning he was up ahead. He was struck and killed by a G train. **The union wants a transit worker at the last station before a curve to be posted on the platform** to verbally warn train operators that there's a work crew ahead on the tracks setting up flagging lights and to proceed with extra caution. As an interim measure, **the union demands an additional flagging light on the platform of the station** before a work zone being established. **The MTA refuses**, apparently because they are more worried about slowing trains down in limited situations than the lives of employees.

TWU Local 100 President John Samuelsen said: "The MTA's position is a ticking time bomb and recipe for another fatality."

