

Lawmaker 'appalled, disgusted' that 3 workers killed at San Leandro company in last decade

By Lisa Fernandez | Published May 1, 2025 1:18pm PDT | San Leandro | KTVU FOX 2 |

The Brief

- Assemblywoman Liz Ortega said she was 'appalled and disgusted' to learn three men were killed at San Leandro's Alco Iron and Metal.
- Ortega said she has requested an audit of Cal-OSHA to learn more about the agency's investigations.
- Alco has the highest death rate of nine other metal scrap recyclers in California reviewed by KTVU from 2015 to 2025.

SAN LEANDRO, Calif. - A California lawmaker told KTVU on Thursday that she was "appalled and disgusted" after learning that three workers at one San Leandro metal scrap recycling company were killed on the job in the last eight years.

"I was reminded of how broken our current system is when it comes to protecting workers," said Assemblywoman Liz Ortega (D-San Leandro), who is also chair of the Labor and Employment Committee. "Everyone should have the right to go to work and be safe and know that they're going to come home to their families when their job is over."

Ortega said she had no idea how bad the safety issues were at Alco Iron & Metal, [where a KTVU investigation found that three employees](#) – Luis Guerrero, Ray Alfaro and Alberto Anaya – died almost four months ago in January, 2022 and 2017, respectively.

Cal-OSHA, the state agency in charge of workplace safety, fined the company after each death. But so far, Alco has only paid for Anaya's death eight years ago, after appealing the \$45,000 fine and paying only \$7,000, records show. Alco has contested paying the \$18,000 fine for Alfaro's death, and Cal-OSHA is still investigating Guerrero's death.

KTVU obtained exclusive video showing the moment Guerrero was crushed by a

forklift at work.

Alco has the highest death rate of nine other metal scrap recyclers in California reviewed by KTVU, Cal-OSHA records from 2015 to 2025 shows.

In fact, only one other metal recycling company has had a single death over the last decade: Sims Group USA, which has 4,000 employees, 20 times more than Alco.

In addition to the three employees being killed, Cal-OSHA records show 64 citations resulting from 22 state inspections dating back to 1991 at Alco. Twelve of those violations were "serious" and six were "willful."

In a statement, Alco executives said their family-owned company has "always been a safe and family-oriented place to work."

"Alco truly is a family, and all of us watch out and care for each other," the statement read. "Alco prides itself on a robust safety training program and a culture where all management and employees buy into its importance."

The Alco statement said that "each of our employees is required to go through a rigorous training orientation when they are hired and that training is refreshed on a regular basis during their employment."

Ortega said she said what the Alco story proved to her was that her questions about what the state is doing to hold employers accountable were "validated."

"There are holes in the system," she said. "And people lives are at stake. We need to do something about it."

She said she has asked for an audit of Cal-OSHA, to be ready this summer, to determine how workplace complaints are handled and investigated.

But more than just finding out numbers and data, Ortega said she doesn't want to forget sight of the fact that three men – fathers and husbands – were killed while doing their jobs and earning money for their families.

"They were actually human beings whose names should not be forgotten," she said.

The Source

Interview with Assemblywoman Liz Ortega, prior KTVU investigation.
