

Body trapped in unstable cold storage facility



Photo: Tony Bock

SEARCH CONTINUES Machines move debris from the VersaCold plant in Brampton where a man died under an avalanche of frozen food that pushed out a wall and caused a partial collapse of the roof.

Tonnes of debris lifted in 2-day search

Employee pinned under frozen food

‘It was like a domino effect’

Mike Funston
Toronto Star

For the second day in a row, workers using heavy machinery continued to remove tonnes of debris from the collapsed section of a Brampton warehouse so that firefighters of an employee who was killed early Saturday. The 57-year-old inventory specialist, whose name police won't release until his body has been recovered, died when he was pinned under five rows of frozen foodstuffs piled on heavy skids 15 metres high at the VersaCold

plant on Walker Rd. at Airport Rd.

Gary Jarrett, assistant division chief for Brampton Fire and Emergency Services, said the fire department went from rescue to recovery mode “only after we had exhausted all our efforts,” and it was certain the victim was dead.

He didn't want to get specific on how that was determined but said a police do and thermal imaging equipment were used.

The collapse caused the west wall of the 10,000 square-foot section to buckle and the roof to collapse, along with the five rows of shelves containing the foodstuffs. The shelves were supported by beams that were

attached to the roof, Constable Wendy Sims said yesterday. “It was like a domino effect,” Sims said. “We just don't know yet what happened first.”

Demolition crews painstakingly tore down heavy girders and removed debris to get to a section of the warehouse where the body was believed to be, about 12 metres inside.

“The debris pile inside is massive. It's an absolute disaster in there,” Sims said.

Jarrett estimated yesterday it likely would be about 24 hours before enough debris could be removed for firefighters to safely enter the premises. He said the crews would work through the night until the body is found.

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