

Truck Driving Fatality File



Truck driver is charged with 5 deaths in wreck on 10 Freeway last year in Rialto; pleads not guilty

A truck driver who authorities say caused a fiery collision a year ago on the 10 Freeway in Rialto that killed five people pleaded not guilty Tuesday, Feb. 19, to five counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence.

Michael Ray Coley, 44, of Riverside, was released on his own recognizance after the hearing in Superior Court in Rancho Cucamonga, court records said. The next hearing was scheduled for Feb. 25.

Fatigue by Coley contributed to the midday crash, the California Highway Patrol said in a news release Tuesday.

On Feb. 16, 2018, just before 1 p.m., Coley was driving a 60-ton truck that pumps liquid concrete west on the 10 approaching Riverside Avenue when it veered left and plowed through the center median barrier, initially colliding with three eastbound vehicles, including a motorcycle, the CHP said.

The impact pushed them into a fourth vehicle, touching off a fire that engulfed them and killing three of the four drivers. The truck then rolled onto a fifth vehicle, killing both occupants, the CHP said.

The dead were identified as Linda Crowell-Thomsen, 55, and Jerry D. Thomsen, 59, of Menifee; Miguel Martinez-Medina, 63, of Los Angeles; Edgar Kunkler, 63, of West Covina; and Twentynine Palms resident Dudley White, 73.

Coley suffered what were described as moderate injuries.