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NJDOL Completes Extensive Inspection Program Along the Jersey Shore to Increase Beach Worker Safety

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 28, 2022

TRENTON – Throughout July and August, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) led an expansive effort to inspect and provide beach safety assessments to beach patrols along the state’s coastline to mitigate issues involving boat and lightning safety.

These inspections were prompted by the heartbreaking deaths of two young lifeguards, Norman Inferrera III, 16, and Keith Pinto, 19, both in August 2021. Norman perished after his surfboat capsized at Cape May’s Reading Avenue Beach, which in June was renamed Inferrera Memorial Beach. While stationed on a lookout tower at White Sands Beach in Berkeley Township, Keith was struck by lightning and succumbed to his injuries. The beach was dedicated as Keith Pinto Memorial Beach at White Sands in July.

Compliance officers from NJDOL’s Office of Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) were deployed to the Cape May and Berkeley Township beaches following each incident to investigate associated safety concerns. After learning of the potential boat- and lightning-related hazards faced by beach workers, PEOSH initiated a large-scale inspection project to spread knowledge and awareness of these dangers in an effort to prevent future tragedies.

“Norman and Keith were valued young members of their communities, their squads, and this state who gave their lives in protecting their fellow New Jerseyans and guests visiting our shoreline,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “This beach safety initiative was a vast and critical undertaking, and as a result, our Jersey Shore destinations are now more aware and better equipped to address boating and lightning safety issues.”

PEOSH, which is responsible for inspecting, investigating, and educating workers and employers on workplace safety matters to ensure the safety and health of employees, performed a total of 58 inspections of beach patrols employing public employees in Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, and Cape May counties. Compliance officers found violations relating to boat hazard assessments, boat hazard assessment certifications, lightning policies, and record keeping, but no penalties will be assessed if proper steps are taken by the municipalities to abate the identified issues.

“We are glad the State of New Jersey agrees that safety should be our number one priority,” said Captain Mark Dileo of the Surf City Beach Patrol, which earned a satisfactory inspection with zero violations. “We maintain high standards to keep our lifeguards and our beaches safe, and this is reflected in everything we do while our lifeguards perform their daily duties, which include training, water surveillance, making rescues, and providing first aid.”

PEOSH will release statewide Safety Alerts on boat and lightning safety in the near future.

To view all Health and Safety Alerts issued by PEOSH, visit:

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/safetyandhealth/programs-services/peosh>

For more information on the NJDOL’s Division of Public Safety and Occupational Safety and Health, please visit: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/safetyandhealth>

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