

1 killed, another wounded on the interstate in Champaign.

A Champaign resident was pronounced dead today. 43-year-old Emily Sawyer arrived at the Carle Foundation Hospital after being struck with a rock, the size of a football, on the overpass onto Interstate 74. Police received a report over the phone of young males throwing debris from the Prospect Avenue overpass onto the Interstate.

The football-sized rock crashed through the front windshield of Sawyer's 2008 Mitsubishi, splitting her head open. Then, according to police, the car crashed into a railing separating oncoming traffic on I-74. No other vehicles were involved in the crash but a few motorcyclists offered help to Sawyer. Police estimate rock to weigh about 10 pounds.

The passenger in the vehicle was 86-year old, Celine Taylor, Who was Emily Sawyer's mother. Celine was also taken to the same hospital as Emily for examination. Celine was examined with a broken arm and multiple bruises. She was "disoriented" after the accident.

Relatives of both Emily Sawyer and Celine Taylor were at the hospital and conducted a news conference. Sawyers' two sisters, Felicity Shrove, and Donna Taylor issued a statement at

the hospital: “This was a senseless tragedy. Emily was a wonderful mother and caring daughter. Who would do this to a perfect stranger, just for kicks? It could have been any one of us or any of our kids. We hope that steps can be taken to prevent this from happening to anyone else.”

Emily Sawyer was driving her mother, Celine Taylor, to church in St. Joseph. Relatives said that when Emily’s father died four years ago, Sawyer carried on a tradition of taking her mother to the Holy Family Catholic Church every Saturday morning. After church, they would go shopping and have lunch together at Marketplace Mall.

Emily Sawyer was a divorced mother of three kids all under the age of ten, and a breast cancer survivor. Sawyer had gone a lumpectomy and chemotherapy about two years ago. She worked as an administrative aide at unit 4 schools in Champaign.

Anyone with additional information about the accident can help identify the two males by calling Champaign County Crime Stoppers at (217) 373-TIPS.

