



**Fatality #24 - September 9, 2003**  
**Powered Haulage - Surface - Wyoming**  
**RAG Coal West Inc. - Belle Ayr Mine**

**COAL MINE FATALITY** - On September 9, 2003, a 36-year old utility person with 4 years of mining experience was fatally injured at a surface coal mine. The victim and a co-worker were using two pick-up trucks to assist moving the power cable for an electric shovel that was being repositioned. One of the trucks lost traction in a muddy area and a nylon tow rope was attached to a hook on the truck's front end. The tow rope was then attached to a hook on the back of the second pick-up. On the first attempt to pull the truck, the metal hook broke loose from the hitch of the front truck, pierced the windshield of the rear truck and struck the victim's head.



**Best Practices**

- Use only tested and approved mechanisms for pulling or towing.
- Obtain approval of manufacturer for modifications to original towing equipment.
- Ensure employees are properly instructed on proper towing practices.
- Ensure vehicles have sufficient traction for surface conditions.
- Conduct audits (observations) of specific tasks to ensure proper techniques are employed and tools/materials are maintained.
- Never exceed the rated capacity of a tow vehicle or towing equipment.
- Use hands-on training specific to the individual task.
- Communicate & prepare pre-task check of materials and techniques for every application.

This is the 24<sup>th</sup> fatality reported in calendar year 2003 in the coal mining industry. As of the accident date in 2002, there were 22 fatalities reported in the coal mining industry. This is the seventh fatality classified as powered haulage in 2003. There were seven fatalities classified as powered haulage at this time in 2002.