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GENERAL INFORMATION

Coal Mine Fatal Accident 2007-08



Operator:	Twin Pines Coal Company Inc.
Mine:	Mine #2, #3, #4
Accident Date:	July 2, 2007
Classification:	Powered Haulage
Location:	Dist. 11, Cullman County, Alabama
Mine Type:	Surface Coal Mine
Employment:	66
Production:	50,000 clean tons/month

ACCIDENT DESCRIPTION



On July 2, 2007, a 59 year old bulldozer operator with over 35 years experience was fatally injured when struck by a pickup truck operating in reverse (being backed-up). The victim and two other bulldozer operators were at their personal vehicles, which were parked in front of, and to the right of, their bulldozers.

The bulldozers were parked in a line along the drill ground access road (see picture). The pit foreman drove up to the three operators and instructed them to move their bulldozers to an area across the entrance road in preparation for a highwall shot. The victim was walking back to his bulldozer when the foreman, who was using only the side view mirrors of the pickup truck, backed over him. The accident occurred because all available means (looking over the driver's shoulder and using the inside rearview mirror) were not used to assure that it was safe to operate the truck in a reverse direction.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Root Cause: The driver of the pickup truck did not make certain that persons were clear before proceeding in a reverse direction on the drill ground road. An effective policy or procedure was not in place to assure that persons were clear before placing vehicles in motion.

Corrective Action: The mine operator shall train all persons operating pickup trucks on mine property to make certain that prior to moving their vehicle they will assure, by all means necessary, and by using all available safety equipment installed within their vehicles, i.e. mirrors and horns, that persons are clear of the intended path of the operating vehicle.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

104(a) Citation No. 7692279 was issued to Twin Pines Coal Company, for a violation of 77.1607(g).

Condition or Practice:

"On July 2, 2007 at approximately 3:15 pm, a foreman operating a 2005 Toyota Tundra pickup truck, failed to be certain by signal or other means, that all persons were clear before moving. This failure resulted in the foreman striking a bulldozer operator who was walking toward his bulldozer on the drill ground access road, fatally injuring him. The foreman stated to MSHA accident investigators that while he was backing his truck down the drill ground road he never looked in the center rear view mirror of the pickup. This condition resulted in the bulldozer operator being in the truck operator's blind spot."

Best Practices

- Ensure a travel lane is clear before moving a vehicle. Train miners to not walk or stand in travel lanes.
- When backing up, look over your shoulder to eliminate blind spots. When using mirrors, use all available mirrors.
- Do not travel long distances in reverse, and when able, turn the vehicle around to drive in a forward direction.
- Install "rear viewing" cameras on vehicles.
- Sound horns before moving equipment in areas where miners are present.