



# News Release

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## **MSHA Launches Investigation into Cause of Kentucky Mine Blast**

**ARLINGTON, Va.**—The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today announced the appointment of Thomas E. Light as the Darby Mine No. 1 investigation team leader. He will lead an investigative team to determine what caused the explosion at the Darby Mine No.1 in Harlan County, Ky. Five miners died following the underground coal mine explosion on May 20.

“We continue to pray for the family and friends of the five miners who lost their lives this past weekend. The MSHA investigation will thoroughly examine the scene of the mine explosion to determine the exact cause of the accident, so the families will know what happened and we can prevent this from occurring again,” said David G. Dye, MSHA acting administrator. “I’ve appointed Tom Light as the team leader to head a team of mine safety professionals. He and the team will look for the root cause of the accident and look at any health and safety violations that may have contributed to the blast. They will interview potential witnesses and establish a chronology leading up to the event.”

Light is MSHA’s assistant district manager in New Stanton, Pa. A 31-year veteran of the agency, Light has held numerous positions within MSHA, including field-office supervisor, roof-control supervisor and mine inspector. Previously, he worked as a section foreman for Island Creek Coal Co.

Light and his team will evaluate all aspects of the mine accident, including potential causes and compliance with federal health and safety standards. The team will examine the accident site, interview mine personnel and others with relevant information, review records and plans and inspect any mining equipment involved at the mine. Once the investigation is complete, MSHA will issue a report summarizing the findings and conclusions of the investigative team, identifying root causes of the accident and how the incident unfolded. Any contributing violations of federal mine safety standards that may exist will be cited at the conclusion of the investigation.

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