

# News Release



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## **MSHA levies \$1.85 million in fines for Crandall Canyon Mine disaster** *Failures by mine operator, engineering consultant contributed to mine collapse*

**PRICE, Utah** – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today announced that it has fined the operator of the Crandall Canyon Mine in Emery County, Utah, \$1,340,000 for violations that directly contributed to the deaths of six miners last year. Agapito Associates Inc., a mining engineering consultant, was fined \$220,000 for faulty analysis of the mine’s design. MSHA cited the mine operator for 11 additional, noncontributory violations issued as the result of the investigation. The proposed penalty for these violations is \$296,664, bringing the total proposed penalties against the mine operator to \$1,636,664. Crandall Canyon Mine is operated by Genwal Resources Inc., whose parent company is Murray Energy Corp.

The six miners were killed on Aug. 6, 2007, when roof-supporting coal pillars collapsed in a catastrophic coal outburst that violently ejected coal over a half-mile area in the underground mine tunnels. Ten days later, two mine employees and an MSHA inspector died in another coal outburst that occurred during rescue efforts.

“MSHA’s investigation found that Genwal Resources recklessly failed to immediately report three previous coal outbursts that had occurred, two in March 2007 and one just three days before the August 6<sup>th</sup> accident,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for MSHA. “These reporting failures were critical, because they deprived MSHA of the information it needed to properly assess the operator’s mining plans. MSHA also found that the operator was taking more coal than allowed from the barrier pillars and the floor. This dangerously weakened the strength of the roof support.”

MSHA accident investigators have cited Genwal Resources Inc. and Agapito Associates Inc. for the following violations:

- The mine operator did not immediately contact MSHA after coal outbursts threw coal into the mine openings and disrupted regular mining activities for more than one hour on three separate occasions prior to the August 6 outburst.
- The mine operator failed to propose revisions to the roof control plan when conditions (coal outbursts) clearly indicated that the plan was inadequate and miners were being exposed to dangerous conditions.
- The operator violated the approved roof control plan by removing coal that was required to support the roof.
- The operator’s outside engineering firm failed to recommend safe mining methods and pillar/barrier dimensions, and the operator failed to maintain pillar dimensions that would effectively control coal outbursts.

The complete accident investigation report is available at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).

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