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MSHA announces results of September impact inspections

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that federal inspectors issued 374 citations, orders and safeguards during special impact inspections conducted at 18 coal mines and two metal/nonmetal mines last month. The coal mines were issued 292 citations, 28 orders and one safeguard, while the metal/nonmetal operations were issued 52 citations and one order.

Special impact inspections, which began in force in April 2010 following the explosion at Upper Big Branch Mine, involve mines that merit increased agency attention and enforcement due to their poor compliance history or particular compliance concerns, including high numbers of violations or closure orders; indications of operator tactics, such as advance notification of inspections that prevent inspectors from observing violations; frequent hazard complaints or hotline calls; plan compliance issues; inadequate workplace examinations; a high number of accidents, injuries or illnesses; fatalities; and adverse conditions, such as increased methane liberation, faulty roof conditions and inadequate ventilation.

As an example from last month’s inspections, an impact inspection was conducted on Sept. 23 during the second shift at D & C Mining Corp.’s underground coal mine in Harlan County, Ky. Inspectors arrived at the mine and immediately captured and monitored the mine phone to prevent advance notification of their presence. The inspection resulted in seven 104(d)(2) withdrawal orders, one 107(a) imminent danger order and 11 104(a) citations, of which 16 were designated significant and substantial.

The imminent danger order was issued when the inspection team found a cigarette lighter near the continuous mining machine, marking the second time since February that smoking articles were found underground at this mine. This condition provided an ignition source in the presence of combustible materials, loose coal and coal dust accumulations in an area with inadequate rock dust to prevent an explosion. The September impact inspection was the sixth conducted at the mine since April 2010.

Inspectors wrote two of the withdrawal orders for inadequate roof and rib supports at the face area of the mine where miners normally work and travel during their shift. Violations included loose, unsupported drawrock, as well as wide roof and rib bolt spacing, all of which created the potential for roof and rib collapses. Additionally, inspectors found inadequate rock dusting, use of a non-permissible cap lamp, accumulations of combustible material, an inadequate smoke search program, inadequate pre-shift examinations, improperly working parking brakes on mobile equipment, nonworking self-contained self-rescuer units, a poorly maintained roof drill dust collection system and inadequate illumination on the mine surface areas.

“The closure order is still one of the most effective tools inspectors have to bring about compliance, even during impact inspections,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “We will not hesitate to use this and other enforcement tools to protect the nation’s miners.”

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As a second example, MSHA conducted an impact inspection Sept. 12 to 16 at Robinson Nevada Mining Co.'s Robinson Operation, a large surface copper mine located in White Pine County, Nev. MSHA issued 34 citations during the inspection, including 25 citations to the mine operator and nine to independent contractors working on mine property.

Among the hazards inspectors cited were inadequate testing of electrical grounding systems, and unattended pieces of mobile equipment that were left with engines running and parked on a grade without properly blocking the wheels. In addition, approximately 30 compressed gas cylinders were stored without caps to prevent injury to the valves which, if damaged, could pose an explosion risk. Inspectors also found an open excavation hole that was not supported to prevent material from falling onto workers.

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 347 impact inspections, which have resulted in 6,187 citations, 584 orders and 22 safeguards.

Editor's note: A spreadsheet containing the results of impact inspections in September 2011 accompanies this news release.

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MSHA Monthly Impact Inspection List

(September 2011)

September 2011 Coal						Type of Issuance				S&S Information				Issuances - Type of Action								Justifications														
Mine Information						Cit	Orders	Safe -guards (Coal only)	Total	S&S	Non- S&S	Total	S&S Rate	104(a)	104(b)	104(d)(1) Citation	104(d)(1) Order	104(d)(2)	104(e)(2)	314(b)	103(k)	104(g)(1)	103(j)	107(a)	Total	1. Operator Tactics	2. Hazard Complaints /Hotline Calls	3. Plan Compliance Issues	4. Inadequate Exams	5. Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses	6. Fatal Accidents	7. Enforcement History	8. Adverse Conditions			
District	State	Mine ID	Controller Name	Operator Name	Mine Name																															
District 02	PA	3609226	David C Neiswonger	Neiswonger Construction Inc.	Neiswonger Mines	9	4	0	13	8	4	12	66.67%	9	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	1	1	1								
District 03	OH	3301159	Robert E Murray	The Ohio Valley Coal Company	Powhatan No. 6 Mine	23	1	0	24	9	15	24	37.50%	23	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	1										
District 04	WV	4609193	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Marfork Coal Company Inc.	Parker Peerless	37	0	0	37	21	16	37	56.76%	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37											
District 04	WV	4608735	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Independence Coal Company Inc	Allegiance Mine	4	0	0	4	3	1	4	75.00%	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4												
District 04	WV	4608758	Rhino Resource Partners LP	Rhino Eastern LLC	Eagle #1	19	0	0	19	8	11	19	42.11%	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19												
District 04	WV	4608759	Robert E Ellis	Newtown Energy Inc	Eagle Mine	8	0	0	8	3	5	8	37.50%	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8												
District 04	WV	4609091	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Marfork Coal Company	Horse Creek Eagle	44	4	1	49	29	19	48	60.42%	43	0	1	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	49												
District 05	VA	4406499	Sunoco, Inc.	Dominion Coal Corporation	Dominion No 7	11	1	0	12	6	6	12	50.00%	11	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12												
District 06	KY	1518864	Kevin R Yonts	Vision Coal, Inc.	Mine #2	18	1	0	19	5	13	18	27.78%	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	19	1	1	1	1								
District 07	KY	1518182	Horace Garrison Hill	D & C Mining Corporation	D & C Mining Corporation	11	8	0	19	16	2	18	88.89%	11	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	19	1											
District 07	KY	1518516	Charles Collins	Linsco Energy LLC	No 1	8	1	0	9	6	3	9	66.67%	7	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9												
District 08	IL	1103054	Peabody Energy	Big Ridge Inc	Willow Lake Portal	22	1	0	23	3	20	23	13.04%	22	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	23												
District 12	WV	4608994	James H Booth	Argus Energy WV LLC	Deep Mine No 8	14	0	0	14	9	5	14	64.29%	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14												
District 12	WV	4608801	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Aracoma Coal Company Inc	Aracoma Alma Mine #1	10	0	0	10	7	3	10	70.00%	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10												
District 12	WV	4601544	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Spartan Mining Company	Road Fork #51 Mine	11	0	0	11	4	7	11	36.36%	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11												
District 12	WV	4608659	MELISSA CLINE	Glow Worm Coal Company	Mine No. 32	15	0	0	15	4	11	15	26.67%	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15												
District 12	WV	4608570	Richard H Abraham	Rio Group, Inc.	Coalburg No 2 Mine	18	1	0	19	15	4	19	78.95%	18	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	19												
District 12	WV	4609018	James River Coal Company	Rockhouse Creek Development, LLC	No. 8	10	6	0	16	8	8	16	50.00%	10	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	16												
18						292	28	1	321	164	153	317	51.74%	289	0	3	11	14	0	1	0	0	0	3	321	4	1	3	4	2	2	17	1			
National Totals																																				

September 2011 Metal/Nonmetal						Type of Issuance				S&S Information				Issuances - Type of Action								Justifications														
Mine Information						Cit	Orders	Safe -guards (Coal only)	Total	S&S	Non- S&S	Total	S&S Rate	104(a)	104(b)	104(d)(1) Citation	104(d)(1) Order	104(d)(2)	104(e)(2)	314(b)	103(k)	104(g)(1)	103(j)	107(a)	Total	1. Operator Tactics	2. Hazard Complaints /Hotline Calls	3. Plan Compliance Issues	4. Inadequate Exams	5. Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses	6. Fatal Accidents	7. Enforcement History	8. Adverse Conditions			
District	State	Mine ID	Controller Name	Operator Name	Mine Name																															
WE	NV	2601916	Quadra FNX Mining Ltd	Robinson Nevada Mining Company	Robinson Operation	34	0	0	34	16	18	34	47.06%	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34												
WE	NV	2600668	Art Wilson	Art Wilson Company	ADAMS CLAIM	18	1	0	19	4	15	19	21.05%	18	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	19												
2						52	1	0	53	20	33	53	37.74%	52	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	53	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0		
National Totals																																				

Total	20	National Totals				344	29	1	374	184	186	370	49.73%	341	0	3	11	15	0	1	0	0	0	3	374	4	3	3	6	4	2	19	1
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