

Roof Bolter Operator



U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration

Health Hazard Information Card HH-43

Breathing mine air with harmful levels of respirable coal mine dust causes coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP) and other lung diseases, collectively known as "black lung."

Roof bolting machine operators often work downwind of continuous mining machines. Both machines are major dust generation sources. Roof bolter operators are often exposed to more toxic quartz-containing dust produced by their machines when they drill, bolt, or clean the dust box. If these dusts are not adequately controlled, roof bolter operators are at risk of developing black lung.

ALWAYS:

- Know the specific dust controls cited in the mine's approved ventilation plan for your mining section.
- Make sure that a full on-shift examination of dust controls has been conducted before production begins.
- Examine the entire dry dust collector system to ensure it is functioning properly. When checking the canister filter, carefully remove and inspect it. **DO NOT** attempt to clean it by dislodging caked dust from the filter media. Check for:
 - » Proper vacuum pressure at drill head chuck
 - » System vacuum leaks (smoke tubes can be used to locate leaks)
 - » Broken or missing dust box door latches and warped and bent doors

(over)

BLACK LUNG KILLS!

- » Missing or leaking door gaskets
- » Condition, proper fit and seal of the filter element. Filters should be replaced, not cleaned and reused.
- » Dust in the exhaust side of the collection system – filter sealing surface and through muffler
- » Properly installed sock on pre-cleaner (if equipped with one)
- Correct any deficiencies in the dry dust collection system.
- Maintain proper ventilation where the roof bolter is working.
- Maintain drill bits in good condition.
- Position yourself upwind and out of active roadways when emptying the dust box.
- Avoid working downwind of the continuous mining machine.
- Leave idle equipment when it is parked downwind of the continuous mining machine.
- Review the operator bimonthly dust sampling results posted on the mine bulletin board.
- Use a properly fitted NIOSH-approved respirator when needed. (**Remember**, MSHA does **not** accept respirators as a primary means of dust control.)
- Participate in your mine's free, confidential chest X-ray program.

—REMEMBER—
**Black lung is NOT curable,
but it is preventable!**

If you have questions about coal mine health matters, please contact your local MSHA office or see the MSHA Web site at www.msha.gov.

