

**MSHA Job Safety Tips
ST Card No. 12**

Coal Mine Longwall Section Employees

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

Longwall mining is on the increase, and longwall accidents are increasing as well. Ignitions and explosions have occurred, as well as other serious accidents.

Causes of accidents on longwall sections include:

- Not properly using and maintaining personal protective equipment.
- Failure to adequately examine work areas and equipment.
- Not ensuring that all ventilation controls are in place and being maintained.
- Methane monitors not properly operating or calibrated.
- Equipment not maintained or properly operating.
- Lack of knowledge and failure to follow ventilation plan requirements.
- Lack of knowledge or failure to follow approved emergency firefighting and evacuation plan.
- Failure to adequately communicate with other miners.
- Insufficient cleanup and rock dusting.

To prevent these types of accidents, miners should:

- Use and know how to use all personal protection equipment including SCSRs, hearing and respiratory protective devices, and safety gloves.
- Install, repair, or replace ventilation controls as needed or required.
- Make sure their work area and equipment have been examined, not only by themselves, but by a certified person.
- Regularly calibrate and check methane monitors to ensure proper function.

- Keep equipment well maintained, free of combustibles and working properly, including water sprays, bits, and guards.
- Know and follow all ventilation plan requirements. Make sure required air current volume and velocity are complied with.
- Know the mine's firefighting and evacuation plans and be familiar with the mine's escapeway.
- Communicate with other workers on the section. Use warning devices on equipment and use reflective material. Report any unusual, or hazardous, condition to mine management.
- Follow the mine's cleanup program. Thoroughly rock dust the mine floor, roof and ribs.

Examples of fatalities on longwall sections in 1996 include the following:

April 10, 1996 -- A mechanic was fatally injured when a longwall crew was moving a stage loader to a new longwall section. A jack was used to keep the stage loader from sliding into the wideside rib. The mechanic went to the jack location to reset the jack, when apparently the jack sprung free and struck the mechanic.

November 14, 1996 -- A longwall foreman was standing in the longwall face walkway when a severe coal bounce occurred. The foreman was covered up to the waist by the blowing coal face, causing fatal injuries.

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