



Enforcement Summary: Operating Mobile Equipment Fatalities in Underground Coal Mines

From January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2008, 14 fatalities resulted from accidents in which individuals were operating mobile equipment in underground coal mines. A description of frequently cited standards and the tragic consequences of noncompliance follows below.¹

30 C.F.R. § 75.1403-10(i) provides that off-track haulage roadways should be maintained as free as practicable from bottom irregularities, debris, and wet or muddy conditions that affect the control of the equipment.

Miners were fatally injured when:

- the canopy of a shuttle car collapsed after striking a roof bolt and the mine roof when the travelway was not maintained free of extraneous material.
- tramming a scoop outby when a wood plank entered the cab.

30 C.F.R. § 75.1725(a) requires that mobile and stationary machinery and equipment be maintained in a safe operating condition or be removed from service immediately.

Miners were fatally injured when:

- a miner was working near the pinch point of a roof bolter that had been modified by extending the boom control levers, increasing the likelihood of inadvertent contact by the operator and creating an unsafe condition while the machine remained in service;
- a battery-powered tractor (shield hauler) was being operated with the doors removed, making it unsafe;
- the machine disabling switch behind the arm bar on a mobile bridge carrier did not function properly and accumulation of materials prevented the arm bar from disabling the machine, creating an unsafe condition.

¹ In many cases noncompliance with more than one standard contributed to the fatal accidents. These frequently cited standards are not the only standards cited for this accident category.