

Highwall Drills



Best Practice Series BP-37

Safety problems involved in drilling operations may include ground failure and highwall hazards, electrical hazards, being caught in moving machinery, being struck by broken pull-down chains or cables, whipping air or hydraulic hoses, and exposure to excessive noise levels and dust.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS . . .

- ✓ **DO** examine work area. Travelways should be clear and bermed. The bench should be level, unobstructed, and stable. All adjacent walls should be inspected and any unsafe areas should be barricaded. The location of overhead power lines, and/or power cables should be observed.
- ✗ **DON'T** enter the drilling area without a proper examination.
- ✓ **DO** realize that the area near the edge of a bench/highwall may not support the weight of a drill rig.
- ✗ **DON'T** position drill in a dangerous location of the bench/highwall.
- ✓ **DO** set and level the drill. Raise the mast and check:
 - Hoses, chains, and cables
 - Gauges and pressures
 - Bits and steel
- ✓ **DO** examine dust collection or suppression system.

With dry systems operating: check skirting, donut, ductwork, filters, gaskets, and seals.

With wet system: check water level in tank.

With system operating: check tank pressure,

hoses, and fittings for leaks, and check flow from drill system.

- ✗ **DON'T** operate drill when visible dust is present from the drilling operation.
- ✓ **DO** examine environmental cabs for cab windows, door seals, filtration filter, positive airflow into cab, and air conditioning.
- ✗ **DON'T** operate drill when visible dust affects other miners.
- ✓ **DO** minimize your chance of injury/illness by using personal protective equipment such as an approved properly fitted respirator and approved hearing protection.
- ✓ **DO** use common sense when dealing with mine dust. Dust is a major health concern for drill operators. Remember the following: (1) Keep your clothes clean and dust free. (2) Keep your cab clean and dust free. (3) Position yourself so that you are out of a dusty environment. (4) Wear your respirator during drilling operations and for short-term exposures to dust such as cleaning a dust box.

Drilling Hazards Can Be Eliminated or Controlled By:

- Inspecting equipment and the drilling area;
- Proper maintenance of drills;
- Using personal protective equipment; and
- Following safe job procedures.

The drill operator and crew are responsible for the safe operation of the machine under all conditions.

Arrive Home Alive

U.S. Department of Labor

Mine Safety and Health Administration

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January 2009