



**Fatality #17 - November 17, 2012**  
**Machinery - Underground - Illinois**  
**Big Ridge Inc - Willow Lake Portal**

**COAL MINE FATALITY** - On Saturday, November 17, 2012, a 30-year-old continuous mining machine operator was killed when he was pinned between the head of the remote controlled continuous mining machine and the coal rib. The victim had 3 years of mining experience, with 20 weeks of experience as a continuous mining machine operator. The victim had mined the left side of an entry and was repositioning the continuous mining machine to mine the right side when the accident occurred.



**Best Practices**

- Install and maintain proximity detection systems. See the [proximity detection single source page](#) on the MSHA website.
- Develop programs, policies, and procedures for starting and tramming remote controlled continuous mining machines.
- Frequently review, retrain, and discuss avoiding the "RED ZONE" areas when operating or working near a remote controlled continuous mining machine.
- Train all production crews and management in the programs, policies, and procedures and ensure that they are followed.
- Ensure that mining machine operators are in a safe location while tramming the continuous mining machine from place to place or repositioning in the entry during cutting and loading.
- Ensure everyone is outside the machine turning radius before starting or moving the equipment.
- When moving continuous mining machines where the left and right traction drives are operated independently, low tram speed should be used.
- Assign another miner to assist the continuous mining machine operator when it is being moved or repositioned. Train all persons in the programs, policies, and procedures for operating or working near remote controlled continuous mining machines. Additional information on preventing these types of accidents can be found at: [MSHA's Safety Targets Program Hit By Underground Equipment](#).

This is the seventeenth fatality reported in calendar year 2012 in the coal mining industry. As of this date in 2011 there were nineteen fatalities reported in the coal mining industry. This is the third Machinery fatality in 2012. At this time in 2011, there were six fatalities in this classification.