

**COAL MINE FATALITY** - On Friday, July 29, 2016, a 58-year-old miner with 40 years of mining experience sustained fatal injuries when an ignition occurred in the shaft he and another miner were working above. Two miners were welding threaded blocks to secure guarding around the drive-shaft between a motor and dewatering pump. Methane ignited within the shaft, and the victim was in the direct line of the ignition force. On August 4, 2016, the victim died from the injuries received during the accident.



### **Best Practices**

- Do not weld, cut, or solder with an arc or flame where methane is detected in excess of 1% by volume. Provide supplemental ventilation in work areas where methane may be encountered.
- Conduct proper examinations for methane immediately before and periodically during welding, cutting, or soldering, especially in areas likely to contain methane. Perform examinations with properly calibrated methane detectors that are capable of detecting concentrations greater than 5%.
- Ensure smoldering metal or sparks from welding, cutting, or soldering do not result in the ignition of combustible materials or methane. Install non-combustible barriers below welding, cutting, or soldering operations in or over a shaft.
- Provide adequate training on the characteristics of mine gases and in the use of handheld gas detectors, including the use of extendable probes or pumps.
- Always use non-sparking tools when working where there is a potential for flammable or explosive methane concentrations and, when practicable, utilize options which do not involve welding or cutting when working near these areas.

This is the seventh fatality reported in calendar year 2016 in the coal mining industry and the first fatality classified as Ignition/Explosion of Gas or Dust. As of this date in 2015, there were eight fatalities reported in the coal mining industry. At this time in 2015, there were no fatalities in this classification.