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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Underground
(Coal)

Powered Haulage Accident Fatality Report
April 3, 2026

Ohio County Mine
Ohio County Coal Resources, Inc.
Dallas, Marshall County, West Virginia
ID No. 46-01436

Accident Investigators

Joedy Gutta, P.E.
Mine Safety and Health Specialist

Allan Jack
Mine Safety and Health Specialist

Originating Office
Mine Safety and Health Administration
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Carlos Mosley, District Manager

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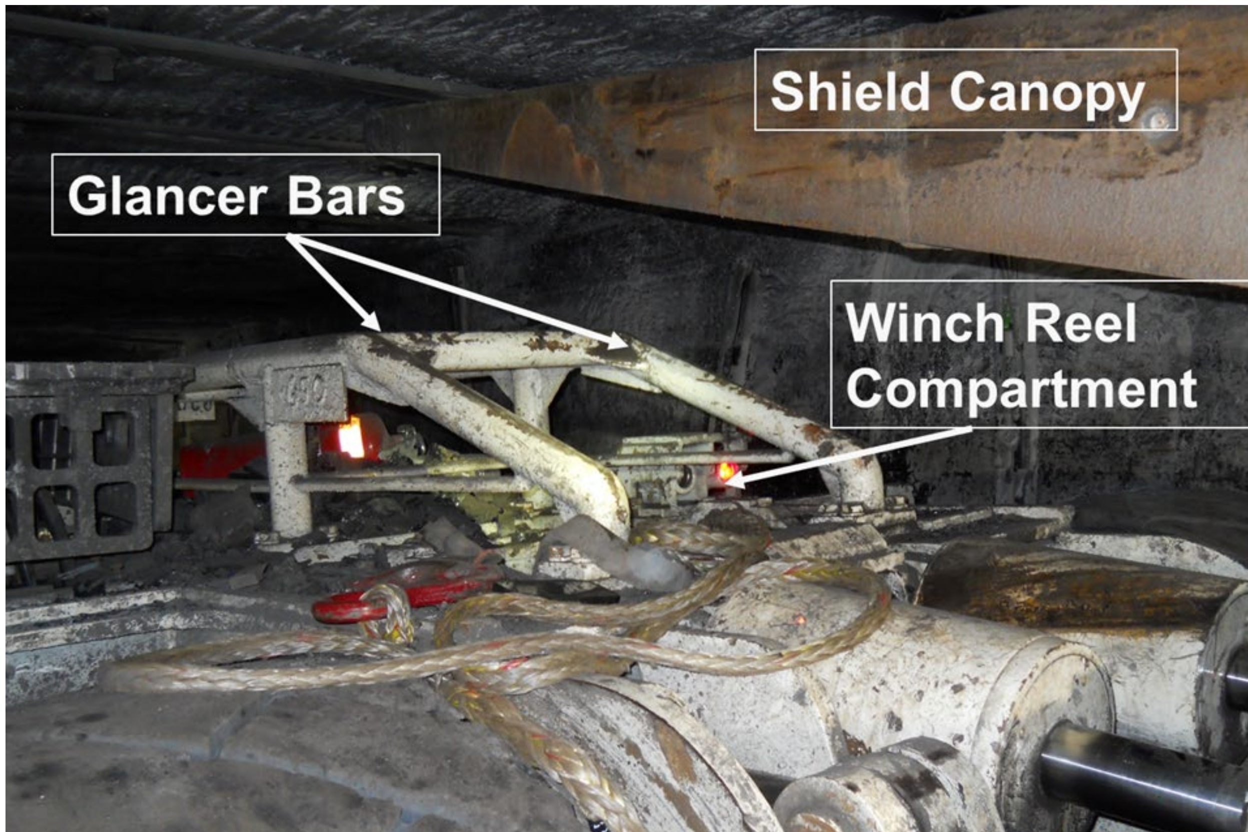


OVERVIEW

On April 3, 2026, at 10:21 a.m., Darin Reece, a 36-year-old section supervisor with 18 years of mining experience, died after he was struck by a longwall shield and pinned against a scoop.

The accident occurred because the mine operator did not develop written policies and procedures addressing repairs to equipment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Ohio County Coal Resources, Inc. owns and operates the Ohio County Mine, an underground bituminous coal mine located in Dallas, Marshall County, West Virginia. The Ohio County Mine employs 462 miners, and operates three 8-hour production shifts daily. The mine extracts coal from the Pittsburgh No. 8 coal seam with three continuous mining machine units and one longwall unit. The average mining height is 96 inches. Belt conveyors are used to transport the coal from the mining units to the surface.

The principal management officials at Ohio County Mine at the time of the accident were:

Ray Wilhelm	General Manager
David Cutlip	Superintendent
Drew Dally	Superintendent
Matthew Cunningham	Safety Director

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) completed the last regular safety and health inspection at this mine on March 31, 2026. A regular safety and health inspection was ongoing at the time of the accident; however, no MSHA personnel were on site at the time of the accident. The 2025 non-fatal days lost incident rate for Ohio County Mine was 5.86, compared to the national average of 3.89 for mines of this type.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

Darin Reece, section supervisor, entered the mine at the Golden Ridge Portal with the day shift crew at approximately 8:00 a.m. He traveled with Bryan Rankin, longwall support supervisor, on a golf cart toward the 3 Left section. The golf cart broke down, and Reece got into a personnel carrier with a crew traveling to the 3 Left section. Based on tracking information, Reece arrived on the section at 9:08 a.m.

Reece provided work assignments to Garrett Tingley, longwall utility; Justin Wade, continuous mining machine operator; and Allan Bonamo, general inside laborer. Wade was assigned to operate a scoop to unload the longwall shields that were transported to the 3 Left section by locomotives. Wade positioned the longwall shields where they could be picked up and taken to the longwall setup face. Tingley and Bonamo were each assigned to operate a scoop to transport and position the shields along the longwall setup face.

Tingley conducted a preoperational check on the No. 1054 scoop, which was already loaded with a shield from the midnight shift. He then trammed to the setup face to set the shield into place. Wade conducted a preoperational check on the No. 555 scoop, which was already loaded with a shield from the midnight shift. Wade unloaded the shield in the No. 2-1 crosscut and trammed to the track entry to unload and stage shields arriving on the 3 Left section.

Bonamo conducted a preoperational check on the No. 2007 scoop and determined the winch rope needed to be repaired. Reece repaired the No. 2007 scoop's winch rope by cutting out a bad section of rope and reweaving the end through the winch rope hook. Bonamo trammed to the shield that was left by Wade in the No. 2-1 crosscut. Reece walked into the No. 2-1 crosscut to assist with loading the shield. While attempting to load the shield onto the front of the scoop, the restraining bolt on the winch reel broke. Reece positioned himself on the scoop to begin making repairs on the winch (Appendix A).

Tingley completed setting the shield on the setup face and trammed in reverse, back towards the No. 2-1 crosscut, to load another shield. As he rounded the corner from the setup face into the No. 2-1 crosscut, the No. 1054 scoop struck the shield partially loaded on Bonamo's No. 2007

scoop. The impact shoved the shield further onto the front of the No. 2007 scoop, striking Reece and pinning him between the underside of the shield canopy and the scoop's glancer bars.

Bonamo exited the cab of the scoop and called for help while moving in Tingley's direction. Tingley trammed forward toward the setup face and was trying to determine what he struck when he heard Bonamo. Tingley exited his scoop and observed Reece pinned between the shield canopy and the No. 2007 scoop's glancer bars. Tingley started yelling and signaling with his light towards the setup face headgate for help.

Rankin was at the shield Tingley had just set and responded to Tingley's call for help. Seeing Reece, Rankin immediately went to call Gordon Hoover, shift supervisor, for help and to retrieve first aid equipment. Hoover travelled to the 3 Left section.

Ralph Dunlop, longwall utility, was also working on the setup face when he heard Tingley call for help and responded to the accident. Dunlop saw Reece pinned between the shield canopy and the scoop's glancer bars and realized the shield canopy needed to be raised to free Reece. Dunlop went to the headgate and disconnected the shield pressure hose that was being used to pressurize the shields on the setup face. Dunlop started stretching it out to reach the shield on the No. 2007 scoop. Lucas Riley, longwall section supervisor, had just left the 3 Left section on his way out of the mine when he learned of the accident and traveled back to the No. 2-1 crosscut and aided Dunlop with the hose. They connected the shield pressure hose to the shield pinning Reece and pressurized it, lifting the shield off Reece.

Cody Holland, maintenance supervisor; William Rinderer, roof bolter on a continuous mining machine; and Shawn Silver, longwall machine operator, arrived at the scene. Silver brought first aid supplies and a backboard. The miners placed Reece on the backboard and transported him to the emergency ride. Tom Ott, longwall maintenance manager, and Lance Rossini, longwall maintenance coordinator, arrived as Reece was being placed into the emergency ride. Rankin drove the emergency ride while Rinderer, Ott, Rossini, and Holland provided aid to Reece. Hoover met the ride on his way into the section and notified Jason Collins, dispatcher, of the accident. Collins made the call to 911 at 10:30 a.m.

Erik Costello, continuous mining machine mechanic and emergency medical technician (EMT), met the emergency ride on the way out of the mine. Costello entered the ride and Rossini exited to make room. Costello assessed Reece, did not detect a pulse, and made the decision to attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Sloan Geho, assistant electrical coordinator and EMT, entered the emergency ride and assisted with CPR. Costello radioed Collins to request life flight transportation from the mine for Reece. The emergency ride arrived at the portal bottom and transported Reece to the surface. Reece's care was turned over to Dallas Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Dallas EMS paramedics provided an assessment to Matthew Davis, Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine at WV Medical Coordination Center, who pronounced Reece dead at 11:18 a.m.

INVESTIGATION OF THE ACCIDENT

On April 3, 2026, at 11:14 a.m., Matthew Cunningham, safety director, called the Department of Labor National Contact Center (DOLNCC). The DOLNCC notified Tyler Peddicord, assistant district manager. James Baker, assistant district manager, received email notification of the accident and notified Larry Johnson, supervisory mine safety and health inspector. Johnson sent Ralph James, mine safety and health inspector, to the mine to secure the scene and obtain written statements from miners. Baker assigned Joedy Gutta, mine safety and health specialist, as the lead investigator and they traveled to the mine. Peddicord assigned Allan Jack, mine safety and health specialist, to assist in the investigation and he traveled to the mine.

At 12:52 p.m., James issued an order under the provisions of Section 103(k) of the Mine Act to ensure the safety of the miners and preservation of evidence. Gutta and Baker arrived at the mine at 2:40 p.m. and Jack arrived at 3:18 p.m.

The MSHA accident investigation team together with the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training conducted an examination of the accident scene, interviewed miners and mine management, and reviewed conditions and work procedures relevant to the accident. Refer to Appendix B for a list of persons who participated in the investigation.

DISCUSSION

Location of the Accident

The accident occurred on the 3 Left longwall setup in the No. 2-1 crosscut. The No. 2-1 crosscut was the only accessible roadway to the setup face because the shields were already set from the headgate to the 8th shield and from the tailgate to the 52nd shield. Investigators believe the turn from the setup face prevented a clear line of sight from the No. 1054 scoop operator's compartment to identify the No. 2007 scoop and shield sitting in the No. 2-1 crosscut.

Equipment Involved

The equipment involved in the accident included two Caterpillar Model SH650 battery scoops and a Caterpillar Model 2013 longwall shield. The scoops were equipped with glancer bars that were designed to prevent a longwall shield canopy from damaging the operator canopy or other components installed on top of the scoops.

The No. 1054 scoop made impact with the shield that was partially loaded on the No. 2007 scoop. The investigators inspected and tested the scoop and determined the operating condition of the scoop did not contribute to the accident.

The No. 2007 scoop was stationary while repairs were being made to the winch reel. The investigators visually inspected the scoop and tested the directional lights but did not perform function testing of the scoop since it was partially loaded with the shield and was not being operated at the time of the accident. The investigators found the scoop parked with the directional lights on and facing away from the setup face. The investigators determined the condition of the scoop did not contribute to the accident.

The Caterpillar shield, serial number 4088598, located on the duck bill of the No. 2007 scoop, was collapsed in a transport position, not connected to any hydraulic lines, and unable to be operated at the time of the accident. The investigators determined that the condition of the shield did not contribute to the accident.

Maintenance and Repairs in Active Tram Roadway Procedures
The operator did not have written policies or procedures to address performing maintenance or equipment repairs in an active tram roadway. There were no barricades, blocking, or warning lights in place to prevent equipment from entering the No. 2-1 crosscut. There was also no communication with the other scoop operators that the No. 2007 scoop was being repaired in the crosscut. Investigators determined this contributed to the accident.

Examinations
A pre-shift examination of the 3 Left section was conducted on April 3, 2026, between 5:00 a.m. and 5:28 a.m. The examination did not document any violations or hazardous conditions present. The investigators determined that the examination did not contribute to the accident.

Training and Experience
Reece had 18 years of mining experience, with over 11 years at the Ohio County Mine and 17 years as a section supervisor. Reece received annual refresher training on February 17, 2026. Investigators determined Reece received all training in accordance with MSHA Part 48 training regulations.

Tingley had 4 years total mining experience, with 3 years and 6 months at the Ohio County Mine. He had 2 years and 6 months of experience as a longwall utility laborer. Tingley received task training on the Caterpillar SH650 scoop on October 18, 2024, and annual refresher training on October 18, 2025. Investigators determined Tingley received all training in accordance with MSHA Part 48 training regulations.

Bonamo had 10 years total mining experience including 7 months as a general inside laborer at the Ohio County Mine. Bonamo received scoop operator task training on November 13, 2025, and annual refresher training on August 20, 2025. Based on testimony, Bonamo was trained on the Caterpillar SH650 scoop by Reece on April 2, 2026, but no documentation could be provided. Investigators determined Bonamo received all training in accordance with MSHA Part 48 training regulations.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The accident investigation team conducted an analysis to identify the underlying causes of the accident. The accident investigation team identified the following root cause, and the mine operator implemented the corresponding corrective action to prevent a recurrence.

1. Root Cause: The mine operator did not have policies or procedures to address performing maintenance or repairs.

Corrective Action: A safeguard was issued to address longwall set up and recovery regarding work performed on scoops and mobile equipment in haulage and tram roads. All impacted miners have been trained on the safeguard requirements.

CONCLUSION

On April 3, 2026, at 10:21 a.m., Darin Reece, a 36-year-old section supervisor with 18 years of mining experience, died after he was struck by a longwall shield and pinned against a scoop.

The accident occurred because the mine operator did not develop written policies and procedures addressing repairs to equipment.

Approved By:

__________________________________ ______________________

Carlos T. Mosley Date
District Manager

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

1. A 103(k) order was issued to Ohio County Coal Resources, Inc.

   A fatal accident occurred on April 3, 2026, at 10:21 a.m. This order is being issued under the authority of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, under Section 103(k) to insure the safety of all persons at the mine and requires the operator to obtain the approval of an authorized representative of MSHA of any plan to recover any person in the mine or to recover the mine or affected area. This order prohibits any activity in the affected area. The operator is reminded of the obligation to preserve all evidence that would aid in investigating the cause or causes of the accident in accordance with 30 CFR 50.12.

2. A 314(b) safeguard was issued to Ohio County Coal Resources, Inc. under the provisions of 30 CFR 75.1403.

   On April 3, 2026, at 10:21 a.m., a section supervisor died after he was struck by a longwall shield and pinned against a scoop while performing maintenance.

   This is a notice to provide safeguard for the movement of equipment:

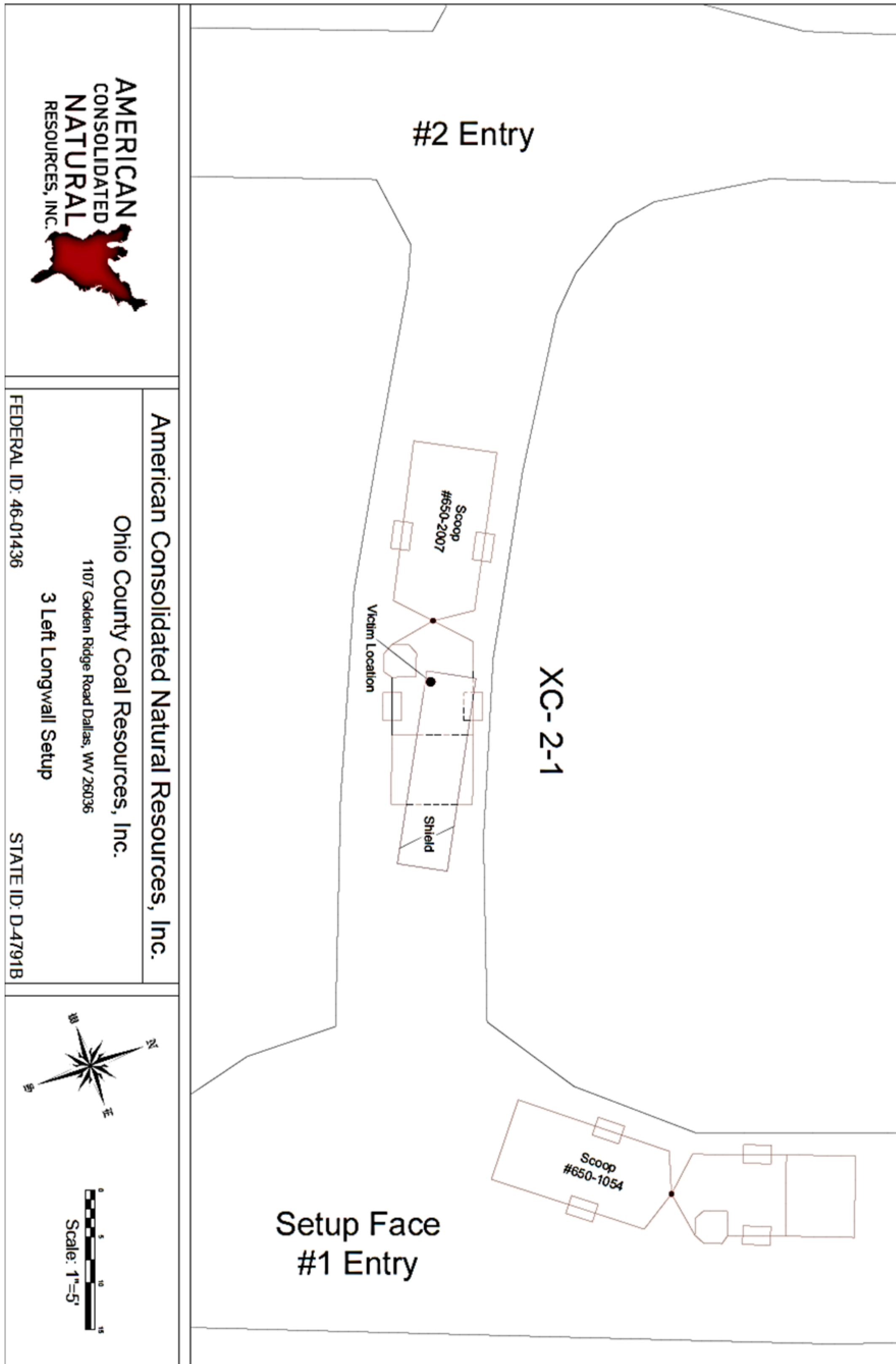
   A. No work shall be performed on mobile equipment while a shield is loaded or partially loaded.

   B. No work shall be performed on mobile equipment in, active tram road if the mobile equipment can be removed from the tram road.

   C. If mobile equipment cannot be removed and repairs are being made in an active tram road, approved strobe lights, and readily visible extension rods (pogo sticks) or cones shall be used in all working areas of an underground mine where maintenance or repair work is being performed and where there is a risk of collision or contact by any other equipment that may be traveling in the affected area. The strobe lights, and extension rods or cones shall be installed to provide warning to mobile equipment approaching the work area.

   D. A foreman shall be responsible for communicating the location of repair work activity to mobile equipment operators utilizing the haulage or tram roads where the miners are working.

APPENDIX A – Map of the Accident Location



APPENDIX B – Persons Participating in the Investigation

Ohio County Coal Company, Inc.

Name	Title
Eric Koontz	Vice President
Kyle Abeyta	Corporate Safety Manager
John Hayes	Corporate Safety Manager
Brian Hough	Corporate Safety Manager
Michael Savasta	Corporate Safety Manager
Ray Wilhelm	General Manager
David Cutlip	Superintendent
Drew Dally	Superintendent
Matthew Cunningham	Safety Director
Bryan Rankin	Longwall Support Supervisor
Lucas Riley	Longwall Section Supervisor
Sloan Geho	Assistant Electrical Coordinator
Lance Rossini	Longwall Maintenance Coordinator
Tom Ott	Longwall Maintenance Manager
Gordon Hoover	Shift Supervisor
Cody Holland	Maintenance Supervisor
Andrew Balcar	General Counsel
Christopher Pence	Attorney / Hardy Pence PLLC
Michael Taylor	Attorney / Hardy Pence PLLC
Justin Wade	Continuous Mining Machine Operator
Greggory Pepperling	Roof Bolter (Continuous Mining Machine)
William Rinderer	Roof Bolter (Continuous Mining Machine)
Erik Costello	Continuous Mining Machine Mechanic
Justin Schafer	Mechanic
Michael Sprowls	Mechanic
Shawn Silver	Longwall Machine Operator
Travis Altmeyer	Longwall Utility
Ralph Dunlop	Longwall Utility
Garrett Tingley	Longwall Utility
Allan Bonamo	General Inside Laborer
Jason Collins	Dispatcher
Beryl Blake	Shuttle Car Operator

United Mine Workers of America

Name	Title
Thomas McGary	International Representative
Michael Kelley	Local President
Josh Downing	Safety Committee
Mike Knight	Safety Committee

West Virginia Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training

Name	Title
Frank Foster	Director
Jeremy Ball	Deputy Director
John Boothroyd	Assistant Attorney General

Edward Peddicord	Inspector-at-Large
Tadd Rankin	Assistant Inspector-at-Large
Michael Matlick	District Inspector
Chris Ray	District Inspector
Ricky Rinehart	District Inspector
John Sparks	District Inspector

<u>Mine Safety and Health Administration</u>

James Baker	Assistant District Manager
Benjamin Hall	Supervisory Mine Safety and Health Specialist
Rodney Fultz	Mine Safety and Health Specialist
Joedy Gutta	Mine Safety and Health Specialist
Allan Jack	Mine Safety and Health Specialist
Ralph James	Mine Safety and Health Inspector