

2016 Preventive Roof/Rib Outreach Program Talking Points

Since 2010, there have been a total of twelve rib fall fatalities (excluding coal burst incidents).

In addition to the fatalities, approximately 50 miners are injured by rib falls every year.

Rock partings (rock layers contained within the coal seam) or rock brows (rock layers above the coal seam) were present in nearly every instance where a fatality occurred.

Rib fall injury rates increase substantially as mining height increases. Miners are at greatest risk when the rib height exceeds seven feet.

Rib fall injury rates also increase when the rock stress increases. Miners are at greatest risk when the depth below surface exceeds seven hundred feet, or a multiple seam interaction is present that elevates the stress levels.

During the past five years, two rib fall fatalities have occurred during construction activities that included the installation of belt drives and overcast construction. In both of these cases, an area had been created in which the mining height was considerably greater than normal, but insufficient rib support had been installed.

During the past three years, two miners have been killed by falls from the longwall face while working in front of the face conveyor. Effective policies, programs, procedures, or controls must be in place to protect miners when they are positioned on the face conveyor or between the conveyor and the longwall face.

Approximately 50 percent of the 28 rib fall fatality victims since 1995 were roof bolting machine operators or continuous mining machine operators.

Rib bolts provide the best protection against rib falls. Rib bolts are most effective when installed on cycle and in a consistent pattern.

Rib support should be installed from a safe location. During the past five years, two miners have been killed while setting timbers for rib support.

Pre-shift and on-shift examinations should note adverse rib conditions, and rib hazards should be corrected or controlled before work commences.

Adverse rib conditions should be reported to management.

