



March 30, 2001

TO ALL UNDERGROUND and SURFACE MINE OPERATORS:

During February and March of 2001, District 3 coal mines have had seven miners injured in three separate accidents while work was being done involving cutting and welding.

The enclosed accident descriptions clearly illustrate the horrible consequences that can occur if all the hazards during cutting and welding operations are not properly addressed.

We appeal to each of you to pass this information through your organization to your employees as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact this office if additional information is needed.

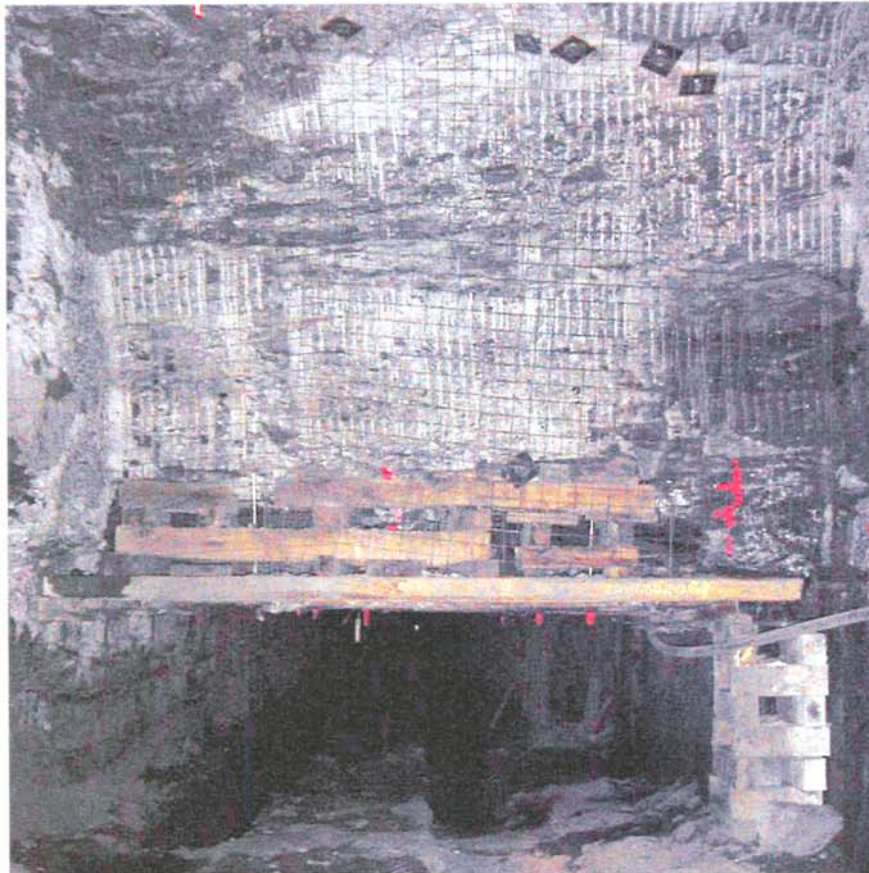
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim", written over a white background.

Timothy J. Thompson
District Manager

Enclosures

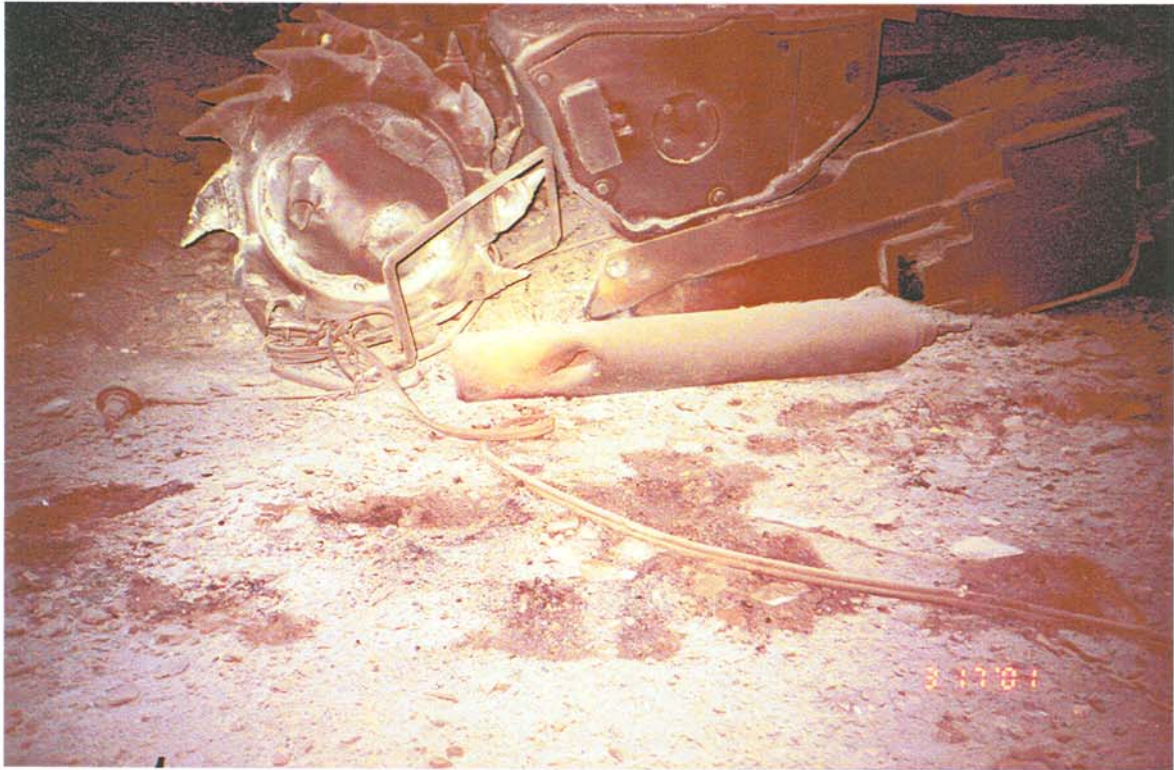




On Thursday, February 8, 2001, at about 11:00 a.m., an ignition occurred near the face of the No. 5 entry of the 1st Northeast Mains Section (ID No. 003). The ignition occurred when an explosive mixture of methane and air was ignited by the flame of a cutting torch being used to cut off previously installed roof bolts along the brow of a fallen area. The cavity had been supported and these roof bolts were being removed to allow for the installation of tunnel liners in the entry. Four miners were injured; however, all refused medical treatment. The cavity extended approximately 5 to 6 feet above the normal mining height of 6 ft. and was approximately 12 ft. in length. The four miners were approximately 12 ft. from the face near the edge of the cavity. A fifth miner was uninjured.



A coal dust explosion occurred at the rail load-out facility near the clean coal silo at the preparation plant resulting in injuries to two independent contract workers and extensive damage to the sides and top of the structure. The workers were welding on the sides of the coal bins while the operator was operating the facility loading rail cars when the explosion occurred. Both workers were flown by Health-net to Mercy Hospital Burn Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. One was hospitalized and listed as satisfactory with mainly 2nd degree burns to his head and hands and one hand having 3rd degree burns. The other worker was examined and released with a bump to the left side of his head.



A mechanic/electrician, was performing maintenance on the Joy 14CM-10-DX continuous mining machine located on the east mains pillar section. While repositioning the machine to align a hinge pin bushing with the cutter motor engaged, the cutter head caught the oxygen and acetylene hoses and wound them around the cutter head and drug the tank cart and oxygen and acetylene cylinders into the rotating cutting head. The resultant action ruptured and ignited both vessels, causing an ignition and explosion. The injured miner was treated for burns of the face and neck at the mine site and transported to the West Penn Burn Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



A SLEEPING GIANT

I am a compressed gas cylinder.

I weigh in at 175 pounds when filled.

I am pressurized at 2, 200 pounds per square inch (psi).

I have a wall thickness of about 1/4 inch.

I stand 57 inches tall.

I am 9 inches in diameter.

I wear a cap when not in use.

I wear valves, gauges, and hoses when at work.

I wear many colors and bands to tell what tasks I perform.

I transform miscellaneous stacks of material into glistening ships and many other things, when properly used.

I transform glistening ships and many other things into miscellaneous stacks of material when allowed to unleash my fury unchecked.

I am ruthless and deadly in the hands of the careless or uninformed.

I am too frequently left standing alone on my small base, my cap removed and lost by an unthinking workman. Then I am ready to be toppled over, my naked valve can be snapped off, and all my power can be unleashed through an opening no larger than a lead pencil.

I am proud of my capabilities. Here are a few of them:

I have been known to jet away faster than any dragster.

I smash my way through brick walls with the greatest of ease.

I fly through the air and reach distances of half a mile or more.

I spin, ricochet, crash and slash through anything in my path.

I scoff at the puny efforts of human flesh, bone and muscle to change my erratic course.

I can, under conditions, rupture or explode. You read of these exploits in the newspapers.

You can be my master only under my terms:

Full or empty, see to it that my cap is on, straight and snug.

Never-repeat-never leave me standing alone. Keep me in a secure rack or tie me so that I cannot fall.

Treat me with respect. I am A SLEEPING GIANT.

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

Date:

March 29, 2001

TO:

All Enforcement Supervisors

REMARKS:

The attached memo to all underground and surface operators are to be hand delivered during the course of normal business.

If you have any questions, please call.

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