During the afternoon shift at approximately 11:30 p.m., a D9L bulldozer operator became entrapped for approximately three hours in a void which had formed over a feeder in the clean coal pile. The equipment operator had 37 years total mining experience and 8 years as a bulldozer operator. Following established training procedures and remaining calm prevented this near miss from being a lost time or fatal accident.

BEST PRACTICES

• Stay in the equipment. STAY INSIDE TO KEEP ALIVE!!
• Stay in constant communication.
• Equipment should be well maintained with submarine glass, seatbelts, and self rescuers.
• Lighting should be adjusted when pile conditions change.
• A remote stop control device should be provided inside the cab.
• Develop and follow procedures for operating equipment around voids.
• Provide heightened awareness annual training to employees involved with these sites.
• Utilize GPS technology to estimate the location of underground feeders.