

News Release



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Contact: Amy Louviere Matthew Faraci
Phone: 202-693-9423 202-693-9406

MSHA to collect \$342,000 in fines from Darby Mine *Operator withdraws challenge to violations in 2006 blast that killed five miners*

ATLANTA – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today announced that the operator of the Darby Mine #1 in Harlan County, Ky., has withdrawn its challenge to citations issued following the May 20, 2006, explosion that claimed five miners’ lives. The Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission approved Kentucky Darby LLC’s formal request to drop its challenge of six contributory safety and health violations that MSHA assessed at \$342,000. With the challenge dropped, the company will be required to pay the penalty in full by Oct. 19, 2008.

“MSHA cited and assessed Darby #1 Mine appropriately for its disregard of basic safety practices that led to the deaths of five workers,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “We will continue to hold mine operators accountable whenever there are violations of safety requirements.”

MSHA’s accident investigation determined that the explosion occurred when a mine foreman cut a metal roof strap extending through seals with an acetylene torch, igniting explosive levels of methane that had accumulated behind the sealed area. Two miners located near the seals died immediately, and three miners trying to evacuate the mine after the explosion died from carbon monoxide poisoning. One other miner was injured but was rescued while escaping from the mine.

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