

¢ Safety Sense ¢

Remote Control Continuous Mining Machines.....

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL



What crosses your mind as you see the 50 ton continuous mining machine you are operating trap you against the mine rib?

For 31 miners who cannot tell you, it was probably a surprise.

For the miners who escaped with their lives, and a lot of lasting injuries, it is a frightening experience, one that they will never forget.

Remote control continuous mining machine operators continue to lose their lives while tramming these machines. There have been 31 fatalities involving remote control continuous mining machines since 1984, two of which have occurred in 2008.

With the advent of remote control systems, the operators are located remotely from the face and can quickly retreat from potential hazards. However, the use of remote controls has resulted in a new hazard where the continuous mining machine operator is being trapped between the machine and the rib.

A new technology has been developed which can be incorporated into the continuous mining machine's operating system. The technology commonly referred to as "proximity detection" was developed by two manufacturers (Nautilus International and Geosteering Mining Services) and has been approved by MSHA for more than 2 years. There is another system being developed which could also be installed to provide "proximity detection". These systems include a device which is carried or worn by the operator and machine mounted components. The system creates a "detection zone" around the continuous mining machine which when entered by the operator, will activate a warning light, de-energize the machine, and stop all machine movement. For more information on proximity detection, please contact the MSHA District office for your area.

Lets do all that we can and ELIMINATE this accident scenario. DON'T PUT YOURSELF IN THE "RED ZONE", BE ATTENTIVE TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS, RESPECT THE EQUIPMENT'S OPERATION, AND INSTALL A PROXIMITY SYSTEM ON THE CONTINUOUS MINING MACHINE.