



News Release

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MSHA announces results of May impact inspections *Separate inspection blitz targets 40 Massey legacy mines*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that federal inspectors issued 158 citations, 26 orders and three safeguards during special impact inspections conducted at nine coal mines last month. In a separate two-day inspection blitz, MSHA inspectors targeted 40 underground coal mines formerly owned by Massey Energy, where they issued 225 violations. The incident that precipitated these inspections was a burned conveyer belt at Road Fork No. 51 Mine in Wyoming County, W.Va. No similar violations were found during the subsequent 40 inspections.

The monthly impact inspections, which began in force in April 2010 following the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine, involve mines that merit increased agency attention and enforcement due to their poor compliance history or particular compliance concerns, including high numbers of violations or closure orders; frequent hazard complaints or hotline calls; plan compliance issues; inadequate workplace examinations; a high number of accidents, injuries or illnesses; fatalities; and adverse conditions such as increased methane liberation, faulty roof conditions and inadequate ventilation.

As an example from last month, MSHA conducted an impact inspection on May 16 at K and D Mining Inc.’s Mine No. 17 in Harlan County, Ky. MSHA personnel arrived at the mine during the second shift, capturing the phones to ensure that no advance notice of their presence was given. Among 43 violations issued were 16 unwarrantable failure withdrawal orders. Inspectors found that the continuous mining machine was operating with the ventilation curtain rolled up and a 60-foot-deep visible cloud of dust. Water pressure on the machine was inadequate, and several sprays were inoperative.

Withdrawal orders also were issued for other hazardous conditions, including accumulations of combustible materials on conveyer belts, defective and stuck belt rollers, a nonpermissible pump starter in the return air shaft, and inadequate electrical and on-shift examinations. Such a confluence of hazards can create conditions that lead to methane and coal dust explosions. The mine was shut down for nine days after the inspection until the operator corrected all of the hazardous conditions.

“Mine operators know full well the consequences that occur when these kinds of conditions exist, and we cannot and will not tolerate this type of noncompliance that endangers miners’ lives and leads to potentially disastrous results,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “What goes on at some of these mines when MSHA is not there is of great concern and likely would not be detected if it were not for the special tactics MSHA employs.”

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US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR NEWS RELEASE – PAGE 2

K and D Mining Inc.'s Mine No. 17 was not the only mine inspectors found to be exhibiting serious violations. On May 2, MSHA personnel conducted an impact inspection at Pay Car Mining Inc.'s No. 58 mine in McDowell County, W.Va., during the evening shift. The inspection party secured the mine's phones to prevent advance notice of the inspection. MSHA issued nine citations, one unwarrantable failure citation and six unwarrantable failure orders. This impact inspection was the mine's second, and the mine also had been issued a notice for a potential pattern of violations in November 2011. The mine subsequently implemented a corrective action program and met the target criteria, and it continues to be monitored by MSHA for a potential POV.

During the May inspection, inspectors found that the mine operator failed to follow an approved mine ventilation plan on two working sections. Although the mine has a history of methane liberation, MSHA's inspection team found insufficient ventilation in two mine entries, the last open crosscut of one mining mechanized unit section, and the working faces and last open crosscut of another such section. The operator was issued five unwarrantable failure orders when no air movement could be measured using calibrated anemometers and, in one instance, the blades of the anemometer reversed, indicating that the ventilation was flowing in the wrong direction.

Also, in the area where a continuous mining machine was operating, inspectors found that the ventilation line curtain rolled up to the mine roof, and 18 feet of curtain across the break were missing. Ventilation to another working face was not provided because 27 feet of curtain were missing.

Additional citations were issued for inadequate roof control, faulty electrical equipment and a conveyor belt, and accumulations of combustible materials. These egregious working conditions exposed miners to potential illnesses associated with black lung and other respiratory diseases, as well as serious injury or death from fire and explosion hazards.

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 452 impact inspections, which have resulted in a total of 8,106 citations, 811 orders and 32 safeguards.

Editor's note: A spreadsheet containing the results of impact inspections in May 2012 accompanies this news release.

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MSHA Monthly Impact Inspection List

(May 2012)

May 2012

Coal

Mine Information						Type of Issuance				S&S Information				Issuances - Type of Action										Justifications									
District	State	Mine ID	Controller Name	Operator Name	Mine Name	Cit	Orders	Safe-guards (Coal only)	Total	S&S	Non-S&S	Total	S&S Rate	104(a)	104(b)	104(d)(1) Citation	104(d)(1) Order	104(d)(2)	104(e)(2)	314(b)	103(k)	104(g)(1)	103(j)	107(a)	Total	1. Operator Tactics	2. Hazard Complaints /Hotline Calls	3. Plan Compliance Issues	4. Inadequate Exams	5. Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses	6. Fatal Accidents	7. Enforcement History	8. Adverse Conditions
District 02	PA	3608704	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	AMFIRE Mining Company LLC	Dora 8	3	0	0	3	2	1	3	66.67%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3					1		1	
District 03	OH	3300968	Rhino Resource Partners LP	Hopedale Mining LLC	Hopedale Mine	10	0	0	10	8	2	10	80.00%	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	1						1	
District 04	WV	4609086	Brody Trust	Brody Mining LLC	Brody Mine No 1	16	1	0	17	11	6	17	64.71%	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17		1						
District 05	VA	4407087	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Big Laurel Mining Corporation	Mine No 2	35	0	0	35	22	13	35	62.86%	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35			1				1	
District 06	KY	1519146	U S Coal Corporation	Licking River Mining LLC	Diablo West Surface	25	0	0	25	10	15	25	40.00%	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25			1	1				
District 07	KY	1517903	Jack H Ealy; Ralph Napier; John D North	K and D Mining Inc.	Mine No.17	27	16	3	46	28	15	43	65.12%	27	0	0	0	16	0	3	0	0	0	0	46	1		1	1			1	1
District 09	CO	0504975	New Elk Coal Company LLC	New Elk Coal Company LLC	Bates Portal	2	1	0	3	2	1	3	66.67%	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3		1			1				
District 12	WV	4608704	James H Booth	ARGUS ENERGY WV LLC	Copley Trace Surface Mine	30	2	0	32	27	5	32	84.38%	30	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	32		1							
District 12	WV	4608884	Mechel Oao	Pay Car Mining Inc.	No. 58	10	6	0	16	14	2	16	87.50%	9	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	16								1	
9						National Totals				158	26	3	187	124	60	184	67.39%	157	0	1	7	19	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1