

Hazard Alert

Coal Bursts During Pillar Recovery Under Deep Cover

A coal burst occurs when coal or rock is suddenly and violently ejected into a mine opening. During the past two years, three serious coal bursts have killed three coal miners and permanently disabled a fourth. All three events occurred while pillars were being recovered at depths of cover that exceeded 1,000 ft.



To reduce the risk of coal bursts, mine operators who are now recovering pillars under deep cover, or who intend to do so, should:

- Ensure that mining crews are alert to the unusual occurrence of any burst-type event while performing pillar recovery. Small coal bursts often occur before a large one.
- Avoid mining directly above or below highly stressed remnant pillar structures in previously mined seams.
- Employ narrow panels protected by properly-sized barrier pillars.
- Avoid mining directly into the cores of highly stressed pillars.
- Be aware of geologic features that may contribute to heightened burst risk, including strong sandstone roof and/or floor, faults and/or joints, sandstone channels, and seam rolling/pitching conditions.
- Attempt to identify areas of higher burst likelihood based on the depth of cover, the geological conditions, the potential for multiple seam interactions, and recent ground control experience. Such assessments are most useful when they are guided by an experienced ground control professional.



REMEMBER:

Safety depends upon what you

DO or DON'T DO.