

DISTRICT 2 – COAL MINE NEAR MISS



On August 12, 2011 a surface mechanic/electrician was servicing an active gob vent borehole pump when an ignition of methane occurred. The miner received second and third degree burns to his hands, arms, and face. At the time of the accident, two employees of an independent contractor, were in the process of modifying the PVC pipe discharge stack to add a water collection system.

Best Practices

- Before performing any work on a methane exhauster pump, duct work, or protective fencing, shut off the methane feed engine that drives the pump, and close the borehole.
- Establish a 25 foot safety zone (physical barrier) around the gob vent borehole (GVB) installation.
- At least one person in each group of persons entering the 25 foot safety zone will be qualified and equipped with a multi-gas detector capable of measuring methane, oxygen, and carbon monoxide concentrations.
- The exhaust stack of the GVB will be maintained a minimum of 10 feet in height and also above any fencing installed in the area.
- Training for all personnel to the hazards associated with the gob ventilation boreholes.
- If methane is detected 1.0% or greater, no further work permitted except work to dilute methane levels to below 1.0%.
- No smoking, open flames, vehicles, cell phones, or radios permitted within 25 feet of the borehole while the borehole is open and/or the pump is running.
- A 6 foot in height fence will be constructed to prevent unauthorized trespassing to the GVB wellhead installation. The fencing shall be constructed of noncombustible material or coated with flame retardant materials having a flame spread index of 25 or less, as tested under ASTM E162-87.