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MSHA announces results of October impact inspections *Tunnel Ridge Mine receives 2 targeted inspections in 1 month*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that federal inspectors issued 210 citations and 14 orders during special impact inspections conducted at nine coal mines and five metal/nonmetal mines last month.

The monthly 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; adverse conditions such as increased methane liberation, faulty roof conditions and inadequate ventilation; and respirable dust.

As an example from last month, two separate impact inspections were conducted at Tunnel Ridge LLC’s Tunnel Ridge Mine in Ohio County, W.Va., on Oct. 9 and Oct. 23. Inspectors issued 24 citations and two orders during these two impact inspections, the fourth and fifth for this operation.

During the first inspection, enforcement personnel traveled all the conveyer belts and cited the operator six times for accumulations of combustible materials. Inspectors found fresh coal spillage up to 3 feet deep, loose coal and coal dust, and float coal dust along long distances of beltlines, around the belt structure and bottom rollers, and on the mine floor. Misaligned belts and belt conveyor flights, missing bottom rollers and damaged belt conveyor components also were found. One walkway within 2 feet of an energized belt was obstructed with loose rock, loose coal and sloughage, and the mine floor was irregular and slick. These conditions exposed miners to potential entanglement between the belt and the moving rollers; the accumulation of combustible materials increased the potential for a belt or mine fire. Additionally, the mine operator failed to record a number of hazardous conditions in its pre-shift/on-shift record book.

In order to examine the mine when all mechanized mining units were up and running, inspectors returned two weeks later. During the second inspection, they focused on health compliance and issued seven citations and two orders. The mine operator was cited four times for failure to maintain the dust collection systems in permissible condition on four different roof bolting machines. Violations included clean side filters packed with drill dust, a damaged dust filter, loose gaskets on the dust box door and holes in the suction hose. The operator also failed to comply with the approved ventilation plan. While loading coal, the continuous mining machine produced no water and no water pressure when tested by the inspector. Failure to maintain the roof bolter dust collection system and comply with the approved parameters on the continuous mining machine allowed respirable dust to be exhausted into the mine atmosphere. These operating conditions increased the exposure of miners to respirable dust and developing black lung and other respiratory illnesses.

The operator also was issued an unwarrantable failure order for coal accumulations of dry loose coal and coal dust in depths of 3- to 28 inches and approximate length of 585 feet in multiple entries. These conditions were not identified during the required pre-shift examinations. Consequently, this section of the mine was shut down for more than 25 hours.

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“Workplace examinations are a vital part of keeping mines safe, and these inspections exposed alarming inadequacies in those exams,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “MSHA issued new health and safety rules in August requiring mine operators to conduct more thorough examinations to find and fix hazards to prevent this very situation. Mine operators cannot continue to put miners at risk by letting hazardous conditions languish until MSHA cites them.”

As another example from last month, MSHA conducted an impact inspection on Oct. 23 and 24 at the Strata Corp., Portable Crushing Plant #1 in Grand Forks, N.D., and issued 19 citations and three orders.

Inspectors cited the mine operator for allowing various items to accumulate in the walkway, creating a slipping or tripping hazard for workers attempting to access supplies kept in the parts trailer and storage shed. An unwarrantable failure citation was issued for failure to provide a safe means of access to the plant’s main fuel storage tank. The ladder in place would not reach the top of the tank, creating the potential for an 11-foot fall. On three previous occasions, the operator had been cited for this violation.

Inspectors found a skid loader machine running over 480-volt power cables, creating an electrical shock hazard. Since no effort was made by the mine operator to abate this condition, the inspector issued a closure order until berms were built to restrict access to the cables. An unwarrantable failure order was issued for the operator’s failure to conduct workplace examinations since Oct. 20.

Other existing hazards included a grinder and sanding machine without a guard, missing cover plates over electrical outlets, inadequately splicing a 480-volt power cable, not guarding the drive pulley on a portable air compressor, not properly securing a compressed gas cylinder and not maintaining proper task training records. An order requiring the withdrawal of three miners was issued because they had not received the proper task training.

Last July, a 49-year-old equipment operator with 18 weeks of mining experience was killed at this operation. He was standing on the discharge end of a 150-foot stacker belt conveyor, greasing the head pulley, when a co-worker started the conveyor. The victim fell off the conveyor approximately 50 feet to the ground below.

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 523 impact inspections and issued 9,160 citations, 889 orders and 38 safeguards.

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

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MSHA Monthly Impact Inspection List

(October 2012)

October 2012

IMPACT

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) Order	314(b)	103(k)	104(g)(1)	103(l)	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	9. Respirable Dust Issues						
District 03	WV	4608864	Alliance Resource Partners LP	Tunnel Ridge, LLC	Tunnel Ridge Mine	17	0	0	17	7	10	17	41.18%	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	1													
District 03	WV	4608864	Alliance Resource Partners LP	Tunnel Ridge, LLC	Tunnel Ridge Mine	7	2	0	9	3	6	9	33.33%	7	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1									1				
District 04	WV	4609086	Brody Trust	Brody Mining, LLC	Brody Mine No. 1	11	0	0	11	10	1	11	90.91%	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11		1												
District 05	VA	4407129	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Paramont Coal Company Virginia, LLC.	Deep Mine #25	37	0	0	37	20	17	37	54.05%	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37					1									
District 07	KY	1519533	Arch Coal Inc.	Cumberland River Coal Company, Inc.	Trace Fork 1	3	0	0	3	1	2	3	33.33%	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3										1				
District 07	KY	1518647	Arch Coal Inc	Lone Mountain Processing Inc	Clover Fork No 1	7	0	0	7	3	4	7	42.86%	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7										1				
District 07	KY	1514728	U S Coal Corporation	Fox Knob Coal Company Inc	Foresters Creek Strip	5	1	0	6	1	4	5	20.00%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6			1	1	1									
District 09	CO	0503505	Deseret Generation & Transmission Co-operative	Blue Mountain Energy Inc.	Deserado Mine	37	0	0	37	7	30	37	18.92%	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37	1	1	1											
District 10	KY	1502709	Patriot Coal Corporation	Highland Mining Company LLC	Highland 9 Mine	15	0	0	15	5	10	15	33.33%	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15										1				
District 12	WV	4608808	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Spartan Mining Co., Inc.	Ruby Energy	37	4	0	41	15	26	41	36.59%	37	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	41	1		1											
10						National Totals				176 7 0 183				72 110 182 39.56%									176 0 0 3 2 0 0 0 1 0 1 183									4 2 3 1 3 0 5 3 1								

October 2012

Metal Nonmetal

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) Order	314(b)	103(k)	104(g)(1)	103(l)	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	9. Respirable Dust Issues										
SE	AL	0102947	Stephen Musolino	Alabama Marble Co Inc	Alabama Marble Quarry	6	0	0	6	5	1	6	83.33%	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6																		
RM	MN	2102843	James R Bradshaw	Strata Corporation	Portable Crushing Plant #1	19	3	0	22	9	12	21	42.86%	18	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	22			1	1														
NC	IL	1102957	David Sartorius	Tennessee Sand	Portable Wash Plant	0	4	0	4	0	4	4	0.00%	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4																		
SC	TX	4101628	Texas Industries Inc	TXI Operations LP	STREETMAN PLANT	8	0	0	8	2	6	8	25.00%	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8																		
NE	PA	3609824	Timothy M Smith	Damascus 535 Quarry & Stone Products LLC	Lanesboro Crushing/Lippman J 1, I 2	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0.00%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1				1	1	1												
5						National Totals				34 7 0 41				16 24 40 40.00%									33 1 1 1 4 0 0 0 1 0 0 41									0 0 1 2 2 2 3 0												
Total						15				National Totals				210 14 0 224				88 134 222 39.64%									209 1 1 4 6 0 0 0 2 0 1 224									4 2 4 3 5 2 8 3 1								