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MSHA announces results of December impact inspections

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that federal inspectors issued 135 citations, 24 orders and one safeguard during special impact inspections conducted at 11 coal mines and two metal and nonmetal mines in December.

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. The inspection details of two mines are listed below:

On Dec. 11, MSHA conducted an impact inspection during the day shift at Hanover Resources LLC’s Caymus Mine in Boone County, W.Va. The inspection party monitored the mine’s communication system to prevent advance notice of their arrival, and they proceeded to inspect the mine’s two working sections and a large portion of the conveyor belt. MSHA issued seven [104\(d\)\(2\) unwarrantable failure orders](#) and six [104\(a\) citations](#). This is the first impact inspection at this mine.

Inspectors found that the operator failed to follow the approved ventilation plan that required line curtains to be installed and maintained in idle faces. Inspectors found inadequate airflow, and in some areas, inspectors were unable to measure any air movement. The required line curtains were either rolled up, not hung to the mine floor or placed in the wrong locations. Inspectors also determined that the mine’s ventilation system was disrupted, so belt air was flowing into the working section instead of away from it. The mine operator’s failure to follow the approved plan created conditions that exposed miners to the risk of black lung and mine explosions.

Inspectors also observed accumulations of combustible material consisting of fine coal dust in various locations of a working section. The mine operator did not provide the required hand-held, multigas detector to two crews of miners and an examiner working on the belt and section. Additional violations included an area of unsupported roof without warning markers, failure to apply rock dust after a belt move and the use of wrong sprays on a continuous mining machine. The methane monitor on a continuous mining machine was not in proper working condition.

Hazardous conditions that were obvious and extensive were not recorded in the preshift examination book and not corrected, and the operator permitted miners to work in these areas.

MSHA conducted an impact inspection at the Veris Gold U.S.A. Inc.’s Jerritt Canyon Mill in Elko County, Nev., that began on Dec. 16. Inspectors issued 61 citations and orders to the mine operator.

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Among the hazardous conditions cited during the inspection, MSHA found that an electrician working in the crusher area had been cleaning and performing maintenance on a 480-volt fully-energized switch gear, and there were spent mercury containers found at the bottom of wet mill stairs rather than being stored in a manner that would protect miners from mercury exposure. Nearly four feet of dirt had accumulated on the left side of a conveyor belt, blocking access to the steps and catwalk used to reach the plant and potentially hindering escape during an emergency.

Inspectors also found: a chemical container improperly labeled; no warning signs for hazardous chemical storage; several unsecured gas cylinders; no provision for safe access in several locations; missing electrical cover plates on energized outlets; an improperly grounded cable; unlabeled breakers that exposed miners to electrical hazards; a broken ladder and insufficient illumination; failure to conduct workplace exams and air receiver tanks equipped with the wrong size pressure relief valves, creating the potential hazard of an exploding vessel.

“These two examples clearly indicate that some mine operators still don’t get it,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “They simply failed to comply with the [Mine Act](#) and find and fix hazards to protect miners from injury, illness and death.”

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 700 impact inspections and issued 11,562 citations, 1,076 orders and 49 safeguards.

Editor’s Note: MSHA’s Monthly Impact Inspection List for December 2013 is attached to this email.

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MSHA Monthly Impact Inspection List

(December 2013)

December 2013 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(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	9. Respirable Dust Issues		
District 03	WV	4601436	Robert E Murray	Consolidation Coal Company	Shoemaker Mine	17	0	0	17	9	8	17	52.94%	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	1									
District 04	WV	4609086	Patriot Coal Corporation	Brody Mining LLC	Brody Mine No 1	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	0.00%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2											
District 04	WV	4605315	Douglas M Epling; Debra Epling	Hanover Resources, LLC	Caymus Mine	6	7	0	13	3	10	13	23.08%	6	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13											
District 05	VA	4407129	Alpha Natural Resources, Inc.	Paramont Coal Company Virginia, LLC	Deep Mine #25	13	0	0	13	5	8	13	38.46%	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13											
District 06	KY	1518280	Jeffery A Hoops	Revelation Energy LLC	S-1 Hunts Branch	5	0	0	5	3	2	5	60.00%	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5											
District 07	KY	1518662	TECO Energy Inc	Perry County Coal Corporation	E3-1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0.00%	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1											
District 07	KY	1519015	TECO Energy Inc	Perry County Coal Corporation	E4-2	12	0	0	12	4	8	12	33.33%	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12											
District 08	IL	1103203	Medlock C J Family Ltd Ptnrship; Christopher M James	White Oak Resources LLC	White Oak Mine No. 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0											
District 09	TX	4103659	Energy Future Holdings Corporation	Luminant Mining Company LLC	Tatum Strip Mine	2	0	0	2	1	1	2	50.00%	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2											
District 10	KY	1518335	Patriot Coal Corporation	Dodge Hill Mining Company LLC	Dodge Hill Mine #1	10	0	0	10	5	5	10	50.00%	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10											
District 12	WV	4609319	Cliffs Natural Resources Inc	Cliffs Logan County Coal, LLC	Lower War Eagle	10	1	1	12	1	10	11	9.09%	10	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	12												
11						National Totals				78	8	1	87	31	55	86	36.05%	78	0	0	0	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

December 2013 Impact 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(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	9. Respirable Dust Issues		
Western	NV	2601621	Veris Gold Corp.	Veris Gold U.S.A., Inc.	Jerritt Canyon Mill	49	12	0	61	32	29	61	52.46%	49	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	61											
Western	CA	0405547	James Bradley Slender	BCJ Sand and Rock Inc	BCJ Sand and Rock Inc	8	4	0	12	6	6	12	50.00%	8	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	12												
2						National Totals				57	16	0	73	38	35	73	52.05%	57	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	2	73	2	2	0	1	2	0	2	2	0

Total						13	National Totals				135	24	1	160	69	90	159	43.40%	135	0	0	0	22	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	160	3	4	3	3	6	1	9	4	2
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