



News Release

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MSHA announces results of July impact inspections

Hazards cited at Nebraska operation mirror those found following March fatality

ARLINGTON, Va. – The [Mine Safety and Health Administration](#) today announced that federal inspectors issued 225 citations and six orders during special impact inspections at 15 coal mines and six metal and nonmetal mines in July.

Begun in force in April 2010, the monthly inspections involve mines that merit increased agency attention and enforcement due to their poor compliance history or particular compliance concerns. MSHA conducted impact inspections at mines in Alabama, California, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

The details of one of the mines' inspections are listed below:

MSHA conducted an impact inspection on July 29 at Ulrich Gravel, Inc., Ulrich Pit, in Valley County, Neb. Inspectors found hazards similar to those identified after a [mining fatality](#) occurred at this operation just five months ago. On March 17, a 44-year-old miner was maneuvering a loaded haul truck along an elevated roadway next to a dredge pond, when the vehicle drifted into the water. The victim was removed from the truck, and died two days later in a trauma center.

Enforcement personnel issued 13 citations to the mine operator for violations of various mandatory health and safety standards and two imminent danger orders removing miners from dangerous, unprotected walkways located near open water.

Inspectors cited the mine operator for the following violations:

- Lack of berms or guardrails on mine haulage roads located adjacent to bodies of open water
- Failure to provide berms for large pieces of equipment that travel the roadway
- Obscured visibility caused by cracks in the windshield of a front-end loader
- Failure to provide hard hats in an area where falling materials could strike miners
- Handrails made of loose and sagging cable, creating hazards for miners walking across raised planks

During their inspection, federal enforcement personnel watched as a contract welder and a pumper slid down a bank and stepped on a Jon boat, then stepped from the boat to the pontoons of the dredge, to an 8-inch piece of pipe and to the walkway on which they were working. Those actions could easily have led to slipping, tripping or falls near water that could have resulted in drowning.

“MSHA is looking hard at conditions that can lead to fatal accidents to reverse the recent increase of deaths in the metal and nonmetal mining industry,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “This inspection identified an apparent failure by the mine operator to take necessary actions to find and fix hazards similar to ones resulting in a miner’s death at the mine. The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of

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1977 holds mine operators accountable for conducting workplace examinations, and MSHA will enforce that law.”

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 987 impact inspections and issued 14,786 citations, 1,256 orders and 57 safeguards.

Editor’s Note: MSHA’s Monthly Impact Inspection List for July 2015 is available [online](#).

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