2012 Preventive Roof/Rib Outreach Program

Talking Points

While roof fall fatalities occur much less frequently than they did even 10 years ago, the incidence of rib fall fatalities has remained relatively constant.

During the past three years, more miners have been killed by rib falls than by roof falls.

Since 1995, there have been 25 rib fall fatalities (excluding coal burst incidents).

In addition to the fatalities, approximately 100 miners are injured by rib falls every year.

Approximately 70 percent of the rib fall fatality victims since 1995 were roof bolting machine operators or continuous mining machine operators.

Rock partings (rock layers contained within the coal seam) or rock brows (rock layers above the coal seam) were present in nearly every instance where a fatality occurred.

Rib fall injury rates increase substantially as mining height increases.

Four of the fatalities took place during construction activities, including installation of belt drives, overcast construction, and track grading. In each of these cases, an area had been created in which the mining height was considerably greater than normal, but no rib support had been installed.

Rib bolts provide the best protection against rib falls and are most effective when installed on cycle and in a consistent pattern.

Out of the 25 rib fall fatalities, only three had any rib support installed at all.

Pre-shift and on-shift examinations should note adverse rib conditions, and rib hazards should be corrected or controlled before work commences.

Adverse rib conditions should be reported to management.