



**Fatality #19 - February 1, 2006**

**Fire - Surface - WV**

**Elk Run Coal company Inc. - Black Castle Mine**

**COAL MINE FATALITY** - On Wednesday, February 1, 2006, a 58-year old bulldozer operator with 15 years mining experience was fatally injured while cutting a bench in the natural slope of a hillside in preparation for surface mining. The accident occurred when the blade of his bulldozer ruptured a buried 16-inch, low pressure, high volume, natural gas transmission pipeline. Natural gas escaping from the pipeline immediately burst into flames, engulfing the bulldozer.



**Best Practices**

- Identify and mark all right-of-ways for pipelines and other buried utilities in the proposed mining area before mining begins.
- Ensure that utility markers are installed, maintained conspicuous, and not removed for any reason.
- Maintain a safe distance between active mining and right-of-ways.
- Ensure that certified mine maps accurately depict the location of all active and abandoned gas wells and buried utilities.
- Utilize an independent utility location contractor to verify utility locations.
- Review the identification and location of buried utilities with all employees (additional information at [http://www.msha.gov/Accident\\_Prevention/Tips/gaslines.htm](http://www.msha.gov/Accident_Prevention/Tips/gaslines.htm)).

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> fatality reported during calendar year 2006 in the coal mining industry. As of this date in 2005, there were no fatalities reported in coal mining. This is the third fatality classified as Fire in 2006.