



Enforcement Summary: Lock and Tag Out Fatalities in Coal Mines

From January 1, 2000, through December 31, 2008, 17 fatalities resulted from failure to de-energize and lock out and tag equipment prior to working around or on equipment in coal mines. A description of frequently cited standards and the tragic consequences of noncompliance follows below.¹

30 C.F.R. § 75.511 requires that electrical work on low-, medium-, or high-voltage distribution circuits or equipment be performed by a qualified person, or by a person trained to perform electrical work and to maintain electrical equipment under the direct supervision of a qualified person. The standard also requires that disconnecting devices be locked out and suitably tagged, or opened and suitably tagged when locking out is not possible, by the person performing the electrical work. In addition, the standard requires that locks and tags only be removed by the persons who installed them or, if such persons are unavailable, by persons authorized by the operator or his agent.

Miners were fatally injured when:

- preparing to move an electrical starter box and did not follow proper electrical lock-out and tag-out procedures.
- repairing a trailing cable on a continuous mining machine which had not been locked-out and tagged.
- attempting to complete a repair on a shuttle car without locking-out and tagging the circuit.
- working on the leads to a power center underground when power was restored at the surface and the circuit had not been not locked-out and tagged.
- evaluating work to be done on a transformer.

30 C.F.R. § 75.1725(a) requires that mobile and stationary machinery and equipment be maintained in safe operating condition and machinery or equipment in unsafe condition be removed from service immediately. **30 CFR 75.1725(c)** requires that repairs or maintenance not be performed on machinery until the power is off and the machinery is blocked against motion, except where machinery motion is necessary to make repairs.

Miners were fatally injured when:

- working on a shuttle car without ensuring that it was blocked against motion and power removed.
- attempting to change the bits on a continuous mining machine without disconnecting the power or blocking the auger against motion
- attempting to repair or perform maintenance on a conveyor belt take-up unit while the belt and take-up unit were in operation and not blocked against motion.

¹ In many cases noncompliance with more than one standard contributed to the fatal accidents. These frequently cited standards are not the only standards cited for this accident category.