

**MSHA Job Safety Tips
ST Card No. 9**

**Coal Mine Roof Bolter
Operators and Helpers**

INBY IS OUT!

Accidents involving roof bolter operators and helpers continue to cost lives, disabilities, and lost work days. Injuries and fatalities to roof bolter personnel usually result from:

- Traveling inby roof support.
- Improper hand/body positioning when setting up or installing roof bolts.
- Failure to follow the requirements of approved roof control plan.
- Inadequate/improper testing and examination of the mine roof.
- Improper lifting techniques when handling materials and performing maintenance or repair.
- Failure to use proper tools and equipment when scaling roof or ribs.
- Failure to use personal protective equipment.

To prevent these types of accidents, roof bolter personnel should:

Never travel inby roof support except to install temporary supports.

- Avoid pinch points, especially near the boom, ATRS and canopy. Avoid hand placement on rotating drill steel or body positioning between ribs and equipment.
- Know and follow the provisions of the approved roof control plan.
- Always properly test the mine roof and installed supports. Notify mine management and other miners of any observed hazardous conditions. Make sure the area has been properly examined by certified personnel before entering.
- Use proper lifting techniques. Don't attempt to lift too much weight. Get assistance when needed.
- Always use proper tools and equipment for the job to be done. Use proper length bar when scaling roof and rib.

- Use personal protective equipment.

A brief summary of some of these fatalities follows:

March 1, 1996-- A roof bolter operator was helping repair a broken conveyor belt on a belt drive. He reached over the structure to assist in feeding the belt through the tandem drive roller when he was drawn into the drive rollers resulting in fatal injuries. The accident occurred because the employee used a dangerous procedure to thread the conveyor belt through the belt drive.

April 12, 1996-- Three miners were removing equipment from the mine. A foreman and a utility man, riding in a rubber-tired battery-powered personnel carrier, arrived near where a roof bolting machine was located. The personnel carrier was parked about 32 feet uphill from the roof bolting machine. The two miners left the personnel carrier and traveled downhill, past the roof bolting machine operator standing at the rear bumper of the machine, and were beside the machine when they heard a noise behind them. The personnel carrier had rolled down the 16 percent grade, crushing the roof bolting machine operator against the roof bolting machine, causing fatal injuries.

November 20, 1996 -- A working section was engaged in retreat mining when a coal bump/outburst occurred. The accident resulted in fatalities to two roof bolters, and four additional miners were injured.

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U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration