Introduction

This memorandum summarizes the Office of Accountability’s review of the subject district, field office, and mine. This review included MSHA field activities; level of enforcement; conditions and practices at the mine; and MSHA supervisory and managerial oversight. The accountability review also included evaluations to determine if there were any issues in areas commonly identified during Agency internal reviews of MSHA’s actions following past mine disasters.

Purpose

The purpose of this accountability review is to: 1) Determine whether Agency enforcement policies, procedures, and guidance are being followed consistently; 2) Assess whether mission critical enforcement activities are accomplished effectively; and 3) To effectively evaluate and improve the overall performance of MSHA’s enforcement program. The major outcome expected from the Office of Accountability review program is to identify potential or actual areas for improvement and the subsequent implementation of effective corrective actions to address any identified issues.
Overview

Office of Accountability Specialists Mark Odum and Jim Poynter conducted the review of Coal District 5 and the Norton, Virginia Field Office from October 2014 through September 2015 and a portion of FY 2016 (October 2015 through March 2016). The review concentrated specifically on documentation of the regular E01 inspection, Event No. [redacted], conducted by the Norton, Virginia Field Office of the underground coal mine, during the first quarter of FY 2016.

This review of the Norton Field Office was conducted in accordance with the annual accountability review plan schedule. The [redacted] was selected for review because the mine had received [redacted] enforcement issuances, of which [redacted] were 104(d) actions, during FY 2015 with [redacted] (28%) designated as significant and substantial (S&S).

As a part of the review, the Review Team conducted a mine visit focusing on general mine conditions; whether conditions at the mine correspond with enforcement levels documented in the inspection reports reviewed; and to observe work practices at the mine site.

Mine Visit

Accountability Specialist Mark Odum accompanied the Field Office Supervisor, Staff Assistant, and an inspector to the [redacted] as part of a Regular Safety and Health Inspection (E01). [redacted] is located in [redacted] with an additional portal located in [redacted]. The mine employs approximately [redacted] miners working two eight-hour production shifts and one maintenance shift per day, five days per week. The mine has two active working sections, with one mechanized mining unit (MMU) on each section. The mine produces an average of [redacted] tons of raw coal daily by room and pillar and retreat mining methods, using continuous mining machines with shuttle car haulage. Coal is transported from the mine by conveyor belts to the surface through a portal in Virginia, sent to a processing plant and then transported via over-the-road trucks and rail haulage.

The inspection group traveled to the No. 2 active working section, MMU 002-0. The mine visit included observations of the following: inspection of the working section; examinations of the section and faces for imminent dangers; methane tests; air readings; ventilation; rock dusting and cleanup; roof and rib conditions; the communication and tracking system; the section belt tailpiece; the mining cycle; a permissibility inspection of the section scoop; and the Strata refuge alternative for the working section. The inspector conducted safety talks with the continuous mining machine operator and the supervisor concerning ventilation, roof control, and use of proximity detection system on the continuous mining machine.
Inspections included the travelway/alternate escapeway from the portal to the No. 2 working section; signage; lifelines; dates, times, and initials; the No. 2 section belt entry from belt tail to belt drive including associated fire protection. Other observations during the inspection included the check-in/check-out system; escapeway maps located on the surface and on the No. 2 working section, the A Seals, Nos. 1-7 (120 psi); and the inspector’s post inspection discussions with the operator. The inspector issued two enforcement actions during the mine visit.

Review Results

The accountability review revealed positive findings in several areas, including the following:

- Inspectors thoroughly documented inspections of SCSR
- Inspectors thoroughly documented inspections of hand-held detectors
- Inspectors used pre-printed note sheets to assist in violation documentation

This accountability review identified two issues that required a Corrective Action Plan. (See Attachment B for Office of Accountability Checklist Items and Attachment D for requirements)

Issue 1: The documentation reviewed for the Regular Health and Safety Inspection (E01), Event No. was not complete. (Office of Accountability Checklist item #2)

For three enforcement actions resulting from failure to comply with the approved ventilation plan, a copy of the plan approval letter was not included with the inspectors’ notes.

Issue 2:

A corrective action plan from the District Manager is attached to this report. (See Attachment A)

The district along with the Review Team analyzed the findings identified during this review to determine the root cause(s) of the issues. Issue 1 was a result of insufficient training in the requirements of the documentation procedures, and Issue 2 was due to inattention to detail in completing the review forms. Additional training and reinforcement of the requirements for these items will help address the issues.
The Review Team also identified and discussed with the district some issues that did not require a corrective action plan and inspection best practices as described in the Coal Mine Safety and Health General Inspection Procedures Handbook (GIPH). A general outline of discussion topics is included in an attachment to this memorandum.

Topics discussed included the following: documentation of enforcement actions; the Inspection Tracking System (ITS); documentation for the E01, including the tracking map; and documentation on 103(i) spot inspection schedule. These non-material issues did not require a Corrective Action Plan. (See Attachment E)

As a part of this review, enforcement levels of the mine were compared with the field office, district, and national averages. This comparison showed the S&S rate for the mine was lower than the average S&S rate of the field office, the same as the district average, and higher than the national average. Based on the review of Event No. and observations made during the mine visit, enforcement levels were appropriate for the mining conditions and work practices at the mine.
Attachments

A. Corrective Action Plan

B. Office of Accountability Checklist

C. Citations/Orders issued during this review
   - Citation No. [Redacted] 75.370(a)(1)
   - Citation No. [Redacted] 75.1505(a)

D. Issues requiring a Corrective Action Plan

E. Discussion Topics
MEMORANDUM FOR TED SMITH  
Supervisor, Office of Accountability

FROM: Clayton E. Sparks  
District Manager  
District No. 5

SUBJECT: Attachment E - Corrective Action Plan

This is a response to the review conducted by the Office of Accountability from [Redacted] at the Norton Field Office, District 5, and the [Redacted] The results of your review identified two (2) issues, which are required to be addressed by this district.

DEFICIENCY

Issue No. 1: The documentation reviewed for the Regular Health and Safety Inspection (E01), Event No. [Redacted] was not complete. (Office of Accountability Checklist Item #2)

- A copy of the related approval letters of the approved ventilation plan were not included with the inspector's notes for three out of four enforcement actions issued for failure to comply with the approved ventilation plan.
- Root Cause: Inadequate refresher training for supervisors and inspectors.
- Proposed Corrective Actions: The proposed corrective action for this deficiency, which was identified during the OA Review conducted [Redacted] will be additional training for all CMIs in the Monthly Safety Meetings. This item will be on the agenda, discussed and explained by supervisors, requirement for this item will be noted from the GIPH, an attendance roster will be signed by all participants (CMIs) and a record of the training will be kept with the corrective actions for this review.

Issue 2: [Redacted]
- **Proposed Corrective Actions:** The proposed corrective action for this deficiency, which was identified during the OA Review conducted will be additional training for all supervisors in management meetings. This item will be on the agenda, discussed and explained by the managers, requirement for the items will be noted from the CMS&H Supervisor Handbook, an attendance roster will be signed by all participants and a record of the training will be kept with the corrective actions for this review. Also, D5 will implement a system to provide additional proofreading of the AAs/FARs to check for completeness. This additional proofing will be provided by another FO supervisor or OA.

- **Office or Position Responsible for Implementing the Corrective Actions:** The Staff Assistant will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of these corrective actions.

- **Timeframe for Completion of each Corrective Action:** The corrective actions will be implemented in the April or May 2016 supervisory and managerial meetings.

- **Method for Determining Success:** The Staff Assistant will review 50% of the enforcement actions issued for violations of plans, and AAs/FARs in the quarter following the corrective action to ensure the success of these corrective actions. Also, a short checklist will be put together addressing these issues and will be included in the files for the next 12 months.

The District Manager will send a memorandum to Alfred L. Clayborne, Deputy Director, Office of Assessments, Accountability, Special Enforcement and Investigations through Ted Smith, Supervisor, Office of Accountability upon completion and evaluation of the corrective actions.
Attachment B - Office of Accountability Checklist

1. Determine if complete and thorough E01 inspections are being conducted and/or if policy and procedures were properly followed.
   - Adequate [X] Corrective Action Needed [ ] Comments Below [ ]

2. Determine if documentation for inspections is complete and thorough.
   - Adequate [ ] Corrective Action Needed [X] Comments Below [X]

   The documentation reviewed for the Regular Health and Safety Inspection (E01), Event No., was not complete.
   - A copy of the related approval letters for the approved ventilation plan were not included with inspector's notes when enforcement actions from failure to comply with the approved ventilation plan were issued.

   See Attachment D for requirements.

3. Determine if citations and orders issued during previous inspections were properly evaluated for gravity, negligence, level of enforcement, number of persons affected, and supported by documentation.
   - Adequate [X] Corrective Action Needed [ ] Comments Below [ ]

4. Evaluate inspector/specialist examination of required record books and postings for compliance with applicable standards.
   - Adequate [X] Corrective Action Needed [ ] Comments Below [ ]
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Evaluate inspector/specialist examination of the operator’s maps (on-site) for accuracy, escapeway locations, etc.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Evaluate, upon arrival on the working section, inspector/specialist examination of all working faces for imminent dangers.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Evaluate the inspector/specialist observation of the work cycle and conditions on the working section during the review.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Evaluate the inspector/specialist air quantity, quality, and gas checks during the review.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Evaluate inspector/specialist examination of equipment electrical cables during the review.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Evaluate inspector/specialist examination for permissibility during the review.</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Corrective Action Needed</td>
<td>Comments Below</td>
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11. Determine if previous E01 inspections include examinations of the condition and maintenance of conveyor belts, belt entries, belt drives, fire detection and suppression systems, and separation of belt entries from other air courses.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

12. Evaluate, during the review, the inspection of at least one set of seals, including methods for obtaining samples from sealed area.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

13. Determine if adequate close-out conferences are being conducted at the end of each inspection.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

14. Determine if Possible Knowing/Willful (PKW) Forms are documented and processed according to agency policy and procedures.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

15. Evaluate 103(i) spot inspection (E02) reports for the office/district being reviewed for compliance with agency policies and procedures, including compliance with time frames and separating E02 inspections from other events.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

16. Determine if Hazard Complaint inspections/investigations are being conducted according to policy and procedures.
   - Adequate: X
   - Corrective Action Needed:  
   - Comments Below:  

17. Determine if supervisors are monitoring inspector time and activity to ensure proper use of time, including off-shift and weekend work, by all inspectors.

Adequate [X]  Corrective Action Needed [ ]  Comments Below [ ]

18. Determine if required Accompanied Activities (AAs); Field Activity Reviews (FARs) and supervisory follow-ups are being conducted and documented according to agency policy and procedures?

[ ]

19. Determine if a 104(d) tracking system is in place and being kept current at the office being reviewed.

Adequate [X]  Corrective Action Needed [ ]  Comments Below [ ]

20. Determine if the Uniform Mine File books are being maintained and reviewed according to current agency policy and procedures.

Adequate [X]  Corrective Action Needed [ ]  Comments Below [ ]

21. Determine if supervisors are thoroughly reviewing Uniform Mine Files at least annually?

Adequate [X]  Corrective Action Needed [ ]  Comments Below [ ]
22. Determine if supervisors are visiting each active underground mine at least annually.
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below

23. Determine if all sections where retreat mining is occurring (not to include longwall mining) are being inspected at least monthly?
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below

24. Determine if documentation of staff meetings/safety meetings are effective and relevant to current issues and the Agency’s mission.
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below

25. Determine, after an in-mine visit, if approved plans (Ventilation, Roof Control, Training, Emergency Response Plan (ERP), etc.) are compatible with mining conditions and equipment.
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below

26. Determine if approved plans are being revised or updated to reflect changes in conditions and/or equipment.
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below

27. Determine if plan reviews are in compliance with current agency policy and procedures (performed within required timeframes, tracked from the date of submission, properly documented, and contain input from all affected departments and field offices).
Adequate X  Corrective Action Needed  Comments Below
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District: Coal District 5</td>
<td>Field Office: Norton, VA Field Office</td>
<td>Mine ID:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
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<td><strong>Determine if Assistant District Manager is conducting the required second level reviews and holding supervisors accountable for oversight of Field Activity Reviews and Accompanied Activities.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Determine if district management personnel are reviewing work products and reports for accuracy and completeness.</strong></td>
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- Adequate: X  
- Corrective Action Needed:  
- Comments Below:  

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<td><strong>Determine if District Managers, Assistant District Managers, and supervisors are conducting required mine visits and properly completing the required spreadsheet.</strong></td>
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- Adequate: X  
- Corrective Action Needed:  
- Comments Below:  

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<td><strong>Determine if District Manager is using discretion in granting conferences and monitoring the Alternative Case Resolution (ACR) program to ensure that all decisions (including upholding, modifying or vacating citations) are properly documented and justified by the Conference and Litigation Representatives (CLRs).</strong></td>
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- Adequate:  
- Corrective Action Needed: X  
- Comments Below:  
- NA – Not part of this review.  

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<td><strong>Determine if managers and supervisors are using standardized reports to review critical data relevant to inspections and investigations.</strong></td>
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- Adequate: X  
- Corrective Action Needed:  
- Comments Below:  

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<tr>
<th>33.</th>
<th>Determine if Districts are conducting reviews in compliance with agency policy and procedures including follow-up to determine the effectiveness of corrective actions.</th>
<th>Adequate X</th>
<th>Corrective Action Needed</th>
<th>Comments Below</th>
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<tr>
<th>34.</th>
<th>Determine if information (mine status, methane liberation, number of employees, etc.) is being entered into the MSHA Standardized Information System (MSIS) accurately and in a timely manner?</th>
<th>Adequate X</th>
<th>Corrective Action Needed</th>
<th>Comments Below</th>
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<th>35.</th>
<th>Determine if District Managers are using the Report Center to identify overdue responses from operators and take appropriate actions.</th>
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<th>36.</th>
<th>Determine if a complete permissibility inspection of each longwall system is being conducted by electrical specialists or inspectors who hold a current MSHA electrical qualification card on at least an annual basis.</th>
<th>Adequate X</th>
<th>Corrective Action Needed</th>
<th>Comments Below X</th>
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<th>37.</th>
<th>Determine if a proper examination of the Atmospheric Monitoring System (AMS) and/or AMS systems that operate Carbon Monoxide (CO) sensors for the purposes of 75.1101 is being conducted. A complete inspection includes those items in the Coal General Inspection Procedures Handbook (GIPH) AMS checklist.</th>
<th>Adequate X</th>
<th>Corrective Action Needed</th>
<th>Comments Below</th>
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<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Coal District 5</td>
<td>Field Office</td>
<td>Norton, VA Field Office</td>
<td>Mine ID</td>
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### 38. Determine if SSIs are maintaining a memorandum detailing the reasons for not conducting a special investigation when the district manager decides to take no further action, in accordance with the Special Investigations Procedures Handbook:

| Adequate | X | Corrective Action Needed | □ | Comments Below | □ |

### 39. Determine if proper procedures for conducting, documenting, and reviewing MSHA respirable dust surveys are being followed.

Proper documentation to include blue cards, 2000-86s, etc.

### 40. Determine if District Managers and Assistant District Managers are providing acting field office supervisors with the level of oversight necessary to manage their work groups on a temporary basis including an online distance learning training course with a knowledge check for temporarily promoted supervisors. The guidance will be included in each District's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for training newly promoted field office supervisors.
### Attachment C – Citations/Orders Issued During This Review

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mine Citation/Order</th>
<th>U.S. Department of Labor</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Mine Safety and Health Administration</td>
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**Section I - Miners Name**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (24 Hr. Clock)</th>
<th>Operator</th>
<th>Order Number</th>
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**Section II - Conditions Found**

1. **Condition or Finding**
   - The approved ventilation plan is not being complied with on the active 002 NMU mining section. The continuous miner is loading a shuttle in the 05 right crosscut, an air reading is taken with an MSHA approved and calibrated anemometer, the results of this air reading taken at the end of the line curtain is 5,383 cfm, the plan requires *** cfm.

   *Standard 75.370(a)(1) was cited***

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>A. Health</th>
<th>B. Section of Act</th>
<th>C. Certification of Title 30 CPM</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75.370(a)(1)</td>
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**Section III - Citations/Orders**

1. **Type of Action**
   - Type of Citation
     - A. Notice
       - Date
     - B. Order
       - Date

**Section IV - Proposed Actions**

1. **Time at which proposed action is to be initiated**
   - Date
   - Time

**Section V - Action Taken**

- Adjustments have been made to the ventilation, the air behind the line curtain is now *** cfm.
Attachment D – Issues requiring a Corrective Action Plan

Issue 1: The documentation reviewed for the Regular Health and Safety Inspection (E01), Event No. [redacted] was not complete. (Office of Accountability Checklist Item #2)

- For three enforcement actions resulting from failure to comply with the approved ventilation plan, a copy of the plan approval letter was not included with the inspectors' notes. Three issuances – citation nos.

Requirement: GIPH, page 2-21 – If an enforcement action results from failure to comply with an approved plan, permit, or petition, a copy of the related approval letter and pertinent page(s) shall be included with the inspector's notes.

Issue 2:
Attachment E – Discussion Topics

Topics discussed with the district not requiring a corrective action plan:

- Documentation of Enforcement Actions – Justification of gravity and negligence determination for eight enforcement actions issued during the E01 reviewed. See Citation and Order Writing Handbook For Coal Mines and Metal and Nonmetal Mines, PH13-I-1(1), page 11; Coal Mine Safety and Health General Inspection Procedures Handbook, PH13-V-1 (GIPH), pages 2-19 – 2-21.

- Inspection Tracking System (ITS) – Two pieces of equipment were documented as inspected in the notes but were not listed in the ITS. See GIPH, pages 3-49 – 50 - The inspection of all in use and available for use haulage, mobile, and portable equipment should be documented and maintained in the ITS.

- Tracking Map – Two aircourses and a measurement point location were not shown on the map. See GIPH, page 3-42 - A tracking map should be used to record the location of MMU(s) or name of section(s), approved evaluation/measuring points, and each air course inspected.

- 103(i) Spot inspection schedule – Documentation on the spot inspection schedule for omitted information for fourteen of eighteen spot inspections. The omitted information included an event number (one occurrence), shift (12 occurrences), and area inspected (7 occurrences). See Coal Mine Safety and Health Supervisor’s Handbook, AH14-III-4, page 1-8 - A calendar for tracking E02 inspections at mines in Section 103(i) status shall be established. The supervisor responsible for assuring that required E02 inspections are being conducted will be responsible for assuring that the calendar is maintained up-to-date. The calendar should, at a minimum, show the mines where E02 inspections were conducted, the persons who conducted the E02 inspections, event numbers, the dates of inspections, the shifts, and the areas inspected.