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GENERAL INFORMATION

Coal Mine Fatal Accident 2007-01



Operator:	Oxbow Mining, LLC
Mine:	Elk Creek Mine
Accident Date:	January 6, 2007
Classification:	Handling Material
Location:	Dist. 9, Gunnison County, Colorado
Mine Type:	Underground Coal Mine
Employment:	304
Production:	14,500 Tons/Day

ACCIDENT DESCRIPTION



On Saturday, January 6, 2007, at approximately 12:30 p.m. a 26 year old utilityman, was fatally injured when welded wire mesh panels (also referred to as screens) fell over, pinning him against a diesel-powered scoop. The miner was attempting to remove one of the four bundles of wire mesh panels by cutting the steel banding

straps that held them together, when the accident occurred. The bundles were stored in an upright position leaning against the coal rib. Prior to the accident, the victim had left the face area with the scoop and traveled to retrieve the wire mesh panels to re-supply the roof bolting operation. He parked the scoop beside the bundles of wire mesh panels. As the top banding strap at the outby end of the bundles was cut, the wire mesh became off-balanced and fell, pushing him against the scoop.

ACCIDENT DESCRIPTION



The accident occurred because the bundles of wire mesh panels, stored in an upright position, were not adequately secured to prevent them from falling when the banding straps were cut and the stored energy in the bundles was released causing them to flex and fall. Management's failure to ensure that safe job procedures were used in storing and handling the bundles of wire mesh panels contributed to the cause of the accident. The location of the scoop near the bundles of wire mesh created a restricted and hazardous work area contributing to the cause of the accident.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Root Cause: Management did not have effective training and safe work procedures to address the proper storage and handling of wire mesh panels used on the development miner sections for roof and rib control.

Corrective Action: The mine operator adopted written procedures/instructions for handling wire mesh panels which included using chains to secure upright bundles to the rib, securing the bundles with a piece of mining equipment when cutting the steel straps, and not working between the equipment and the upright bundles when cutting the straps. A Safeguard was also issued related to this corrective action.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

§314(b) Safeguard No. 7290921 was issued to Oxbow Mining LLC according to 30 CFR 75.1403.

Condition or Practice: While preparing wire mesh screens for transportation on January 6, 2007, in the 11 West HG development section, a utilityman was fatally injured when the bundles of screens (referred to as a bunk), stored in an upright manner, fell over pinning the miner against an adjacent scoop. This notice to provide safeguard applies to the safe transportation of screens in the mine. The following procedures shall apply:

1. If the bunk of screens is unloaded whole and placed in an upright position against the coal rib, the screens shall be leaned against the rib at a stable angle and shall be secured from falling by chaining the bunk to the rib or rib support in a manner to adequately support the load. The chains or other devices used for this purpose shall be rated to hold the load. The rib attachments shall be adequate to hold the load. 2.
2. When the bunk is broken into smaller bundles, the screens shall be held in position with a piece of mobile mining equipment while the bands are being cut. Bottom bands shall be cut first.
3. The person cutting the metal bands shall not be located between the screens and the equipment.
4. Prior to moving the mobile mining equipment away from the bunk, the remaining screens shall be secured as per Item 1.

BEST PRACTICES

- Ensure that materials are safely stored and properly handled.
- Before performing a materials handling job, consider all possible hazards and devise methods to safely complete the task. Utilize the SLAM risk program when performing duties involving large objects, massive weights or the release of stored energy.
- Ensure that there is adequate space to work.
- When possible open banded materials while they are resting in a horizontal position.
- Never work in the fall path of objects/materials of massive weights having the potential of becoming off-balanced while in the upright position.
- When working with or on extremely heavy objects/materials placed in an upright position, use a positive means to prevent objects/materials from falling, or moving.