



Mining Accident News No.1124

6 to 18 August 2011

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Saturday 6 August 2011

Ukrainian coalmine blast was caused by engineer mistake: minister

Extract from www.platts.com

A mistake by coal mining engineers probably led to a methane blast on Thursday that killed one and injured 25 miners at a Ukrainian coalmine, Energy and Coal Industry Minister Yuriy Boyko said Friday.

Boyko, reacting to the third major coal mining accident in Ukraine in less than a week, suspended the director and top safety manager at the Krasnokutskaya mine for the period of the investigation.

Boyko said the engineers had probably made a mistake while installing a ventilation system, which had led to dangerous accumulation of methane before the explosion.

The latest blast and the alleged mistake underscore concerns expressed on Thursday by Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, who wants to revamp the coal mine safety system.

Ukraine: Methane explosion at mine in Luhansk region likely caused by smoking

Extract from NRCU - Ukrainian Radio

The probable cause of a methane explosion at the Chervonokutska mine in Krasny Luch, Luhansk region was smoking. This was disclosed during a press conference, by Deputy Head of the State Mining Supervision Victor Shaitan.

According to him, in the place of fire, packs of cigarettes were found. The official added that, according to safety regulations, smoking is prohibited in mines and miners before they go

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
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down should remove all fire-flammable materials.

26 miners have been wounded Thursday after methane explosion at the Chervonokutska mine in Krasny Luch, Luhansk region. One of them died in hospital. State of some miners remain very serious.

Victor Shaitan also informed that today - tomorrow expert commission will publish the official conclusions of the causes of accidents in mines Sukhodolska East and Bazhanov.

This week in mining accident history

7 August 1994

Moura No.2 Mine

Moura, Queensland, Australia

Underground coal mine

11 killed, methane explosion

Source: www.gendisasters.com

On Sunday 7 August 1994 an explosion at Moura No 2 underground coal mine caused the deaths of 11 miners. The warden's report upon the incident was released in Rockhampton in January, soon after the last Queensland section went to press.

The inquiry was conducted under the *Coal Mining Act 1925* (Qld) by Mining Warden Windridge, assisted by four assessors including Professor Roxborough of the School of Mines, University of New South Wales. Hearings commenced on 18 October 1994 and concluded on 6 April 1995. Evidence was received from 66 witnesses.

The Moura mine is situated in central Queensland's Bowen Basin, about 450 km north-west of Brisbane. Underground and open-cut operations have been conducted in the area since 1960. In 1975 13 lives were lost in an explosion at the Kianga mine and 12 miners died in an accident at the Moura No 4 mine in July 1986. Moura No 2 was opened in 1970.

The first explosion occurred on Sunday 7 August 1994, and a second, much more violent eruption

came two days later. Ten men escaped, but unfortunately 11 of their workmates were still underground when, after the second explosion, hopes of their survival were abandoned and the mine was sealed.

The inquiry found that the first event was caused by "a failure to acknowledge, and effectively treat, a heating of coal which, in turn, ignited methane gas". The cause of the second catastrophe could not be determined.

Excessive loose coal was allowed to accumulate in the tunnels and it is probable that fallen rock, in covering it, prevented efficient ventilation. Ventilation was by means of two parallel centrifugal exhaust fans at the top of a 158 m deep vertical shaft. The concentration of carbon monoxide, oxygen, methane and carbon dioxide was monitored by a gas analysis system but the instruments were not adequately supported by "a dedicated and regularly updated plan" to check air quality. The coal was drained of gas for about two years before extraction. However, there was expert evidence that this increased the risk of spontaneous combustion by allowing oxygen to permeate the mineral and to promote overheating when water afterwards reached the coal. On this aspect the report concludes:

"It must now be obvious that reliance on ... an incubation period is not an adequate defence in the face of the many other factors likely to influence ... a heating ... At Moura because of the continual change in panel design and working methods virtually nothing was constant."



Moura No.2 Entries at Toe of Highwall
(Photographer unknown)

Mine safety under scrutiny after Moura disaster

Wednesday, August 17, 1994 - 10:00

By Bill Mason

BRISBANE — The 11 miners buried underground after an explosion at the Moura No 2 coal mine on August 7, along with their suffering families, are the victims of the profit drive of BHP and other corporate mining giants.

Serious questions have been raised about safety precautions at the mine, especially following two previous tragedies near the site — at Moura in 1986, in which 12 miners died, and at Kianga in 1975, in which 13 workers perished.

Some 5000 people gathered in Moura, a tiny central Queensland town, west of Rockhampton, on August 12, to honour the memory of the entombed miners.

Veteran Moura miner Alan Whyte told the gathering that the tragedy "could never undo the spirit of the underground miner".

Three scientists, experts in mine safety, — Drs Robert Barnes, Tony Green and Sally Leivesley — have called for a Senate inquiry into the Moura disaster.

Dr Leivesley said Queensland had experienced four underground mine explosions in 22 years and NSW one. WA also had underground pits.

"We now have a problem causing national safety concerns and it is time to ensure it is sorted out," she said on August 10. "The best way is through a Senate inquiry rather than a Mining Warden hearing.

"Queensland learnt the lesson years ago that police should not investigate police. The same applies to the mining industry. People end up investigating their own work."

United Mineworkers Union state president Andrew Vickers on August 10 criticised the Queensland government and the mining industry

for not spending enough money to make the industry safer.

"There has been a lot of duck shoving and an ongoing debate for two years about reorganisation of the miners' rescue service in Queensland," Vickers said.

"The government and the Workers Compensation Board and the coal companies do not want to pay for it."

To compound the tragedy of Moura, it has been alleged that widows and families of the 11 dead miners could wait years for possible damages pay-outs from negligence claims against BHP.

This follows long court delays and legal stonewalling in a claim brought by six widows of miners killed in the 1986 Moura disaster.

Andrew Vickers said that a similar Supreme Court common law damages claim, lodged by the union for negligence in the 13 deaths at Kianga in 1975 took 15 years to settle.

Vickers said BHP had been "making things as hard as possible within the rules of the system. "They slow down the process, questioning every minor technical detail, making sure every point is argued through solicitors before it even gets to court."

Estimates of the total damages likely to be awarded if the widows in the 1994 disaster win range from \$2 million to \$3 million.

Compare this to the annual super-profit of \$1.28 billion announced on July 1 by BHP, Australia's biggest listed company.

Brisbane lawyer Bob Brittan, who represents six of the widows from the 1986 tragedy, said on August 11 that "heads should roll" over the latest mining disaster as "obviously something is wrong when you have another gas explosion in the mine."

Responding to the public outrage over revelations about the compensation delays over previous cases, the state government has

announced that legislation would be introduced to speed up common-law claims for damages.

Meanwhile, the government has stated that it will set up a Mining Warden's inquiry into the latest Moura tragedy as soon as possible.

BHP has stated it will guarantee the jobs of the remaining 154 Moura underground miners until 1997, but it seems unlikely that the doomed Moura mine will ever reopen, raising speculation about eventual job losses in the area.

Extract from Green Left Weekly, Issue 155

Monday 8 August 2011

WA company fined over workplace accident

Extract from 9News, Aus

A mining maintenance company in Western Australia's Goldfields region has been fined \$90,000 after a 15-year-old apprentice was badly injured by the descending tray of a dump truck.

Dalmain Enterprises Pty Ltd, trading as ATS Mining Maintenance, pleaded guilty to failing to provide a safe work environment and, by that failure, causing serious harm to an employee.

The Boulder-based company was fined \$90,000 in the Kalgoorlie Magistrates Court on Friday and ordered to pay \$3654.50 in court costs.

In February 2007, the apprentice was working with a qualified heavy duty fitter on a 40-tonne Caterpillar truck which had its 10-tonne tray raised vertically in a bay at the company's workshop.

Metal "harden" bars, instead of the usual safety pins, were inserted into eyelets at the anchor points to keep the tray vertical because the eyelets were damaged.

The safety pins were designed to hold the tray against its own weight but not against hydraulic pressure exerted by the truck, which had a lock-out switch preventing it being started and the hydraulics from being engaged.

No isolation tags were attached to the truck to indicate it was being worked on.

The apprentice was tidying up tools when the fitter instructed him to get out from under the elevated tray because he was about to start it to check for oil leaks.

The apprentice moved to another position that was still under the tray, while the fitter assumed he had gone down the ladder to the ground.

The fitter called out to other employees to stand clear, and started the truck.

The tray then began to descend under hydraulic pressure and snapped the harden bars.

The 10-tonne tray came down on top of the apprentice, causing him permanent injuries including serious facial fractures and cuts and leg and back injuries.

Acting WorkSafe WA Commissioner Lex McCulloch said on Monday the case was a shocking reminder of the importance of having lock-out and tagging procedures in place and ensuring they were enforced.

"In this case, manuals detailing the relevant safety procedures for performing maintenance on the truck, including the need to use appropriate isolation procedures, were available at the workplace," he said.

"But the employer did not ensure that they were followed as a matter of course, and a young employee suffered a permanent injury because safe work procedures were not enforced.

"The court found that the employer did not adequately train its employees, and that the company's policy did not require employees to physically lock out machinery while it was tagged.

"It's disappointing that the message is not getting across that it is never safe to leave any piece of machinery operational while doing repairs or performing maintenance," Mr McCulloch said.

Qld: Mine cleared of truck injury claims

Extract from Australian Mining

A mining company and senior site supervisor have been found not guilty over claims of workplace OHS breaches following a truck incident which seriously injured the driver.

After four years, the case has now been finalised, the Daily Mercury reports.

The accident occurred in 2007, when truck driver Dave Jessup was travelling along an access ramp at Vale's former Broadlea coal mine near Moranbah, his truck crashed and overturned.

Jessup suffered multiple fractures to his leg and broke his neck.



Broadlea Coal Management and site supervisor Darren Carpenter were both charged, and pleaded not guilty.

During the trial, witnesses stated that Carpenter was focused on safety in all his duties, and held weekly safety meetings.

Jessup said that he had worked at the site for five weeks after completing an induction course,

during which he was taught pre-start safety checks and how to maintain log books.

However, he said that despite the induction course he had never carried out pre-start checks nor kept up to date log books.

He also admitted that he was not wearing a seat belt.

Industrial Magistrate Dwyer ruled that "the injuries to Mr Jessup were not caused by the contravention of any obligations by Broadlea Coal or Mr Carpenter under the Coal Mining Health and Safety Act."

The Broadlea coal mine was closed in 2009.

USA: Mechanic killed in Ohio coal mine accident

Extract from WSYX – ABC 6, USA

BEALLSVILLE, Ohio -- A coal mine mechanic has died from an accident at an underground mine in eastern Ohio.

American Energy Corporation says Keith A. Baker was fatally injured while working alone early Monday at the Century Mine in Beallsville, about 105 miles east of Columbus.

The news release did not provide other details of the accident but said that it's being investigated by the company and federal and state regulators. American Energy says no other employees were injured.

Baker was from Jacobsburg in Monroe County and had worked at the mine 10 years.

American Energy is part of Murray Energy Corp., based in the Cleveland suburb of Pepper Pike. Murray's website says 450 people are employed at the Century Mine.

Quote of the week



"I don't think about risks much. I just do what I want to do. If you gotta go, you gotta go."

Lillian Gordy Carter
(Mother of former US President Jimmy Carter,
1898-1983)

Tuesday 9 August 2011

Newcrest Mining Limited: Helicopter accident passengers identified

Extract from 4-traders, USA

Formal identification of the passengers who died in a helicopter accident that occurred near Manado in Indonesia on 3 August 2011, is now complete.

The names of the passengers are:

- Mr Willson Joshua Mangihuttua Sibarani Junior Geologist
- Mr Dian Rimba Rudiansyah Junior Geologist
- Mr Zainuddin Achmad Database System Integrator
- Mr Barry George Tomlinson Mechanical Superintendent
- Mr Adrian Leigh Aird UG Mechanical Shift Supervisor
- Mr Dion William Rennie UG Electrical Foreman
- Mr Roelof Johannes Roodt UG Electrical Shift Supervisor
- Mr Roy Meyers Revelino Nawawi Contractor

Two Indonesian helicopter crew members also died in the accident.

Funerals have been held for the Indonesians, Willson Joshua, Dian Rimba, Zainuddin Achmad and Roy Nawawi. Arrangements for the funerals of the two Australians, Barry Tomlinson and Adrian Aird, and the two South Africans, Dion Rennie and Roelof Roodt, are being made by their families.

The management and employees of Newcrest and Aneka Tambang, the PT Nusa Halmahera Minerals (PT NHM) shareholders, express their deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of the men.

Special appreciation has been conveyed to the Indonesian search and rescue team members who located the helicopter.

PT NHM President Director, Iwan Irawan said, "We also thank the many other parties who provided assistance to PT NHM including police, emergency services teams, army, doctors, hospital staff, consular officials, local authorities, villagers and village chiefs, community groups, friends and families, employees and the many others who have worked tirelessly during this distressing period."

"PT NHM is continuing to provide support and counseling to the families and to work with Indonesian authorities."

3 miners die in small mine collapse near northern Colombia

Extract from Colombia Reports

Three gold miners die due to a mine shaft collapse in the northern department of Antioquia, reported local media Tuesday.

Two miners were also wounded, but according to the local disaster center coordinator, "the two were rescued alive and are currently stable and being treated at a hospital."

Some news sources speculate that the small scale mine was an illegal gold mine, which are common in the area.

While authorities have not confirmed the cause of the accident, initial reports from the disaster prevention team that the mine's safety measures did not meet the necessary infrastructure and safety requirements.

"Unfortunately this is a rudimentary mine and it does not have the required infrastructure and safety measures. This is a major cause of accidents in these mines," said John Fredy Rendon Roldan, director of the Administrative Department for the Prevention, Attention and Recovery Disasters (DAPARD).

3 killed in coal mine collapse in NW China

Extract from Xinhua

Three miners died after a coal mine collapsed on Tuesday in Northwest Shaanxi province, according to the mine's operator.

The accident occurred at 11:10 am in the mine operated by Shaanxi Pubai Baishui Coal Mine Co. in Baishui county while five miners were working underground, said a spokesman with the company.

Three died after failing to respond to emergency treatment and another was slightly injured. One miner escaped, said the spokesman.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Wednesday 10 August 2011

Qld: Australia 'behind' on mine collision safety

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

Queensland's mine safety and health commissioner says Australia's mining industry is falling behind international leaders in some aspects of safety.

Commissioner Stewart Bell has addressed Mackay's Bowen Basin Coal and Energy Conference in north Queensland.

He spoke about the importance of avoiding collisions on mine sites involving heavy machinery.

Mr Bell says proximity detectors should be used on vehicles.

"If you look internationally, South Africa and America are now regulating, mandating, to have that sort of equipment on their heavy vehicles," he said.

"We're slightly behind the eight-ball in this sort of technology.

"We have a reputation in Australia for being on the front-foot when it comes to mine safety and in this particular area we're probably behind the rest of the world."

NSW: Mine contractor dies in crash

Extract from Central West Daily, Aus

A 22-YEAR-OLD man is dead and another man has been left with serious head injuries following a crash at Spring Terrace late on Monday night.

Both men were contractors at Cadia Valley Operations, working with S & N Civil Engineering.



CORNER'S REPORT: Police have launched an investigation into the cause of a fatal crash at Spring Terrace on Monday night. Photo: Andrew Micallef, Wide Area Communications

Emergency services crews were called to the single-vehicle crash on Orchard Road, near

Forest Road, at 10.25pm after reports a blue Mitsubishi Magna sedan had hit a tree.

The men were still trapped in the vehicle when the crews, including police, paramedics and volunteers from the Rural Fire Service, arrived.

It took an hour to remove the injured man from the crash site, however the deceased man was not removed until sometime later when a government contractor arrived.

The driver is in a stable condition in Orange General Hospital.

Police are preparing a report for the Coroner and a full investigation is under way.

Cadia acting managing director Nedra Burns offered her condolences on behalf of parent company Newcrest.

“Newcrest has offered counselling services to work colleagues and assistance to the employer of the two contractors,” she said.

“We are all deeply saddened by this accident and extend our sincere sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of the people involved.”

Police are yet to release the men’s names.

USA: Man dies in gravel pit accident near Fairfax

Extract from West Central Tribune

FAIRFAX — A 24-year-old man died Tuesday after becoming entangled in a moving conveyor belt in a gravel pit near Fairfax in Renville County, Minnesota.

According to a news release, the Renville County Sheriff’s Office received a 911 call about noon Tuesday reporting an industrial accident in the gravel pit along 610th Avenue southwest of Fairfax. The caller said that a worker had become entangled in a piece of machinery and had suffered an amputation.

Fairfax Ambulance, Fairfax Fire Department, North Ambulance-Redwood Falls, North Air Care helicopter and the Renville County Sheriff’s Office responded to the scene.

When emergency personnel arrived, the man was no longer entangled in the machinery, but he was not breathing and had no pulse. Despite resuscitation efforts, the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

The name of the victim was not released Tuesday, pending notification of family members.

In investigating the incident, authorities learned the man had been caught in a moving conveyor belt.

The accident is being investigated by the Renville County Sheriff’s Office and the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

USA: Man Seriously Burned in Boone County Mine Accident

Extract from WSAZ.com

Boone County 911 dispatchers tell WSAZ.com a person has been injured at a coal mine in Orgas.

ORGAS, W.Va. -- New information has been released about an accident at a mine that left a worker seriously burned.

The office of Mine Health Safety and Training says a contract worker for New Hall Contracting came in contact with an energized electrical circuit at the Silver Oak Mine in Boone County.

This happened just before 8 p.m. Tuesday.

The man suffered first, second and third degree burns on his upper body.

He is in critical but stable condition at a burn unit in Cabell Huntington Hospital.

The man is 43-years-old, but his name is not being released.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Thursday 11 August 2011

NZ: Minister questioned over missed mine meeting

Extract from stuff.co.nz

Labour Minister Kate Wilkinson has been questioned over why she missed a health and safety council meeting in the aftermath of the Pike River disaster.

Green Party MP Kevin Hague today revealed Wilkinson did not attend the December 16 meeting, the first since the November 19 tragedy, in which 29 miners died.

Ms Wilkinson told Parliament she was in Kaiapoi "attending to some earthquake-related issues."

"I do try to attend all of those council meetings," she added.

Hague tabled the minutes of the meeting which showed Council of Trades Union President Helen Kelly and Business NZ head Phil O'Reilly attended. Seven Labour department officials attended and a representative from the NZ Contractors Federation and Construction Safety Council.

Wilkinson sent her apologies and her private secretary Colin Meehan.

The meeting discussed the Labour department's response to the explosions.

Friday 12 August 2011

USA: Mining company fined more than \$900,000 for fatal blast

Extract from republicherald.com, USA

Almost five years after a Donaldson man died in a Tremont Township coal mine explosion, a judge has ordered the mine owner to pay more than \$900,000 in penalties, federal officials said Thursday.

R&D Mine Coal Co. Inc. must pay \$905,825 as the result of "flagrant" safety violations that

caused the Oct. 23, 2006, blast that killed coal miner Dale Reightler, 43, the U.S. Department of Labor announced Thursday.

"Mine operators must be held accountable for their failure to keep miners safe," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

The Aug. 1 settlement order by Administrative Law Judge Avram Weisberger marks the first time the department's Mine Safety and Health Administration cited a mining company for flagrant violations under the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006, and the second time new legal ground has been broken as a result of the fatal explosion.



submitted photo Dale Reightler, Donaldson, was killed in an explosion at Buck Mountain Mine in 2006

MSHA found that when an unconfined shot was detonated at the face of R&D's Buck Mountain Mine, methane gas exploded in an inadequately ventilated area.

The mine, which was located off Molleystown Road about a mile from Joliett, has been sealed and closed permanently.

Weisberger upheld all the citations that had been filed against R&D and officially assessed the penalties against it.

In 2007, MSHA fined R&D \$874,500, and department spokeswoman Amy Louviere said Thursday that there were additional penalties that accounted for the larger amount Weisberger imposed.

"This is a significant amount of money," Louviere said. "They were very serious violations."

Those violations included failure to comply with approved ventilation and roof control plans, poor blasting practices, assigning unqualified personnel to blasting work and conducting improper preshift examinations, according to MSHA.

MSHA said six of the 10 violations it ruled contributed to the accident were flagrant, which the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act defines as "a reckless or repeated failure to make reasonable efforts to eliminate a known violation of a mandatory safety and health standard that substantially and proximately caused, or reasonably could have been expected to cause, death or serious bodily injury."

Before Weisberger's order, R&D had contested all the violations.

William J. Cluck, Harrisburg, R&D's lawyer, said Thursday that there would be no appeal of the judgment but declined to comment further.

Three men charged with causing the explosion, owner David P. Zimmerman, foreman Steven D. Zimmerman and miner Jeffrey T. Klinger, already have been penalized criminally in Schuylkill County Court.

On Nov. 4, 2009, David Zimmerman, 55, and Steven Zimmerman, 36, both of Pine Grove, each pleaded no contest to involuntary manslaughter and guilty to recklessly endangering another person and three violations of the state Anthracite Coal Mining Act.

Judge Jacqueline L. Russell sentenced David Zimmerman to spend six months on house arrest and 17 months on probation, and Steven Zimmerman to spend three to 23 months in prison, with eligibility for work release and continuation of drug treatment. She also ordered each man to pay costs, a \$1,000 fine and \$50 to the Criminal Justice Enhancement Account, and perform 20 hours of community service.

By pleading no contest to the involuntary manslaughter charge, the Zimmermans, who are father and son, did not admit committing that

crime, but offered no defense to it, agreed prosecutors had enough evidence to prove them guilty and agreed to be sentenced as if they had pleaded or been found guilty.

That case represented the first time sentences had been imposed in Pennsylvania for manslaughter charges stemming from a fatal mine accident,

On Sept. 16, 2009, Klinger, 45, of Tremont, pleaded guilty to blasting coal or rock without first obtaining a certificate to mine, as well as storing explosives or detonators in the direct line of blasting. Russell sentenced him to 60 days probation; however, Klinger has spent time in prison on the charges due to probation violations.

USA: Idaho mine fire likely the work of arsonist

Extract from The Spokesman Review

A fire inside the Lucky Friday Mine last month likely was set by an arsonist, according to the Shoshone County Sheriff's Office.

About 170 miners who were working in the shaft where the fire was detected on July 26 are being scheduled for polygraph tests, Sgt. Detective Jeannette Woodard-Ochoa said Friday.

An investigator from the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives recently reported his findings to the Sheriff's Office, which is investigating the fire along with the mine's owner, Hecla Mining Co., the Idaho Fire Marshal's Office and the federal Mining Safety & Health Administration, Woodard-Ochoa said.

ATF "determined they believe it is arson," Woodard-Ochoa said.

ATF has not released an official finding on the fire, a Seattle-based spokeswoman for the agency said Friday.

A Hecla spokeswoman said she had "not been made aware" of the ATF investigator's findings.

A second, smaller fire discovered in the silver mine earlier last month also is under investigation, officials have said.

On July 26, miners working on the 4900 level of the Lucky Friday were evacuated when the fire was detected, the company said. No one was injured. Three mine rescue teams monitored the fire and prevented it from spreading beyond the 4900 level; it was extinguished the next day.

Hecla is the largest silver producer in the U.S. The Coeur d'Alene-based company announced earlier this week that it will expand the Lucky Friday, near Mullan, Idaho, to extend its life by more than 20 years and boost production by 2 million ounces of silver per year.

Idaho's Silver Valley was the site of one of the deadliest hard-rock mine disasters in U.S. history. Ninety-one men died in the Sunshine Mine fire on May 2, 1972. The fire led to a number of safety reforms, including the requirement that underground workers carry self-rescue respirators, which allow them to breathe when the air is contaminated with carbon monoxide.

Saturday 13 August 2011

Casualties from coal mine explosions fall sharply in China

Extract from Xinhua

The number of deaths caused by coal mine gas explosions in China declined sharply during the first half of this year, coal mine safety authorities said.

A total of 245 people died in 62 gas explosions that occurred between January and June this year, a year-on-year reduction of 31.2 and 25.3 percent respectively, the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety said.

In spite of the declining casualty numbers, the administration said gas explosions still pose a severe threat, as blasts still occur with some frequency.

The administration said that the country's northeastern and southwestern provinces are most vulnerable to coal mine gas explosions.

Sunday 14 August 2011

Covered-up mine accident kills 5 in NW China

Extract from Xinhua

LANZHOU - Five people were killed in a coal mine accident that was kept under wraps up for over 40 days in Northwest China's Gansu province, local authorities said Sunday.

The government of Shandan county launched an investigation after receiving a public tip that the Jinwan coal mine had covered up an accident that killed five miners, the government's information office said in a statement issued on Sunday.

The coal mine was operating illegally, as it had been previously shut down for renovations, according to the statement.

The statement said that the accident occurred on July 2, but failed to mention how the miners died. However, a report on the website of the People's Daily newspaper quoted a local resident as saying that they were killed in a gas explosion.

The coal mine silenced the relatives of the dead with compensation payments, the statement said.

Mine owner Zhao Erfeng, who is now in police custody, confessed to the cover-up during an investigation by local authorities, it said.

Police are still looking for Huang Chao, deputy manager of the mine, the statement said.

Monday 15 August 2011

Ukraine: Mining and industrial safety watchdog names those responsible for accident at Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna Mine

Extract from Interfax-Ukraine

The State Service for Mining Supervision and Industrial Safety has named those responsible for infringements that caused a blast at Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna Mine of public joint-stock company Krasnodonvuhillia (Luhansk region), the service's press service has reported.

The director, deputy director for labor protection, chief engineer, chief energy engineer and chief mechanical engineer of the Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna mine management, and the chief energy engineer and chief mechanical engineer of open joint-stock company Krasnodonvuhillia were said to be responsible for the blast.

The service said that in addition, a shiftman, drilling-and-blasting manager, blaster, ventilation and accident prevention manager, foreman for mining ventilation and accident prevention, PR-2 manager, PR-2 deputy mechanical engineer, acting assistant of PR-2 manager of the Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna mine management and PR-1 deputy manager of Uhleprokhdodka LLC were responsible for the accident.

Five of the said persons were victims of the accident.

"Taking into account the level of responsibility of each person for the violation of Ukrainian law, the governmental commission believes that six employees of the Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna mine management should be fired," reads the report.

As reported, a methane-air mixture explosion took place at the depth of 915 meters in the early hours of July 29 at the Sukhodil'ska-Skhidna coalmine run by the private JSC Krasnodonvuhillia. Twenty-eight people died at the scene

NSW: Workplace safety a top priority

Extract from Mudgee Guardian and Gulgong Advertiser

A blog posted by Darren Snyder on 15/8/2011

Mining companies often promote safety as their number one priority. Local mines also heavily promote safety in and out of the workplace.

A crane toppling at Wilpinjong Coal is the type of accident not often heard about at mines or in the general public. This is because safety measures are in place and it does not often happen.

As many workplaces know, no matter how many safety measures are in place, something will go wrong or the safety system will break down eventually.

This is where the onus is on many workplaces to continue to implement strategies in counteracting potential disasters.

The fact no one was injured as a result of the crane falling at the Wilpinjong mine is a credit to Peabody Energy, its workers, trainers and the company. It's also a credit to the Mine Safety Advisory Council who recently launched a campaign promoting safety in this region.

The accident might have been preventable or the causes may have been something everybody has overlooked.

But you can never be careful enough when in the workplace. Whether it is a mine or the local newspaper, potential workplace hazards confront us every day.

It is how we manage and prevent these hazards that is credit to the staff which put such measures in place.

When you turn up to work today, take a look around. Is everything as safe as it should be? Where is a hazard that may bring you undone? Changing something so small may save a life.

10 killed in gas blast in China coal mine

Extract from Xinhua

GUIYANG -- A gas blast in a coal mine in southwest China's Guizhou Province left 10 people dead and one injured, local government official said Monday.

The blast occurred at about 9:28 p.m. Sunday in the Guohekou coal mine in Panxian County, said Liu Husheng, deputy head of the county.

Eleven miners were working underground and one miner survived the blast with arms being burnt, Liu said.

The individually-owned coal mine has an annual capacity of 150,000 tonnes.

USA: Mingo County man dies in coal mine accident

Extract from West Virginia Public Broadcasting

One man is dead after a mining accident in Logan County. The accident happened early Monday morning.

The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training confirms a fatality at the Mingo Logan Coal Company Mountaineer #2 mine in Logan County. Leslie Fitzwater, spokesperson for the state office, says 46-year-old Charles M. Hall of Williamson died after a roof fall.

"We do know that he died as a result of being hit by rocks that had fallen from the roof of the mine," Fitzwater said.

Fitzwater says Hall had almost six years experience as a miner. Most of that time was spent at this Arch Coal Incorporated owned mine.

Fitzwater says Hall worked as a move crewmen.

"As the mining progresses as the equipment moves, as they change sites that sort of thing," she said, "he would be that would facilitate that move."

The Federal Office of the Mine Safety and Health Administration says Hall was assisting in a longwall equipment move. The office says he was installing roof supports when he was struck by falling rock.

Federal and state mine safety officials are investigating. This is the fifth fatality in the state of West Virginia so far this year.

Wednesday 17 August 2011

Pike miner cheats death again

Extract from stuff.co.nz

Pike River mine survivor Daniel Rockhouse has escaped death once again when the Australian mine he was working in caved in.



DAVID HALLETT/The Press

DANIEL ROCKHOUSE: "I've got nine lives. I probably used three or four of them at Pike and another couple this time."

Rockhouse was one of two miners who survived the Pike River mine disaster last year. His brother Ben was one of 29 men who were killed.

Rockhouse was working in the North Goonyella coal mine in Queensland when he was almost crushed by a cave-in, Radio New Zealand reported.

He started driving up to the portal as soon as he heard the roof beginning to crack.

He said he would be "dead for sure" if he hadn't managed to escape.

He later found out the cave-in was in exactly the same place where he was sitting.

"I got a bit of a fright that I walked away from another very [close] call," he told Radio NZ.

"I've got nine lives. I probably used three or four of them at Pike and another couple this time."

He heard a loud crash when he was driving out of the mine, his ears popped and all the lights went out.

"I got a bit of a fright, a little flashback a bit. I was thinking what's happening here," he said.

"I was far enough away that I didn't see it but I heard it and felt it. It was pretty powerful."

Rockhouse said several hundred tonnes of material, including coal, steel and rock caved in.

He said returning to work in the mines earlier this year kept his mind busy, but his thoughts often wandered back to Pike River.

"Down there it looks like Pike, it just looks like a normal coal mine so I'm going to think about things when I'm down there."

He said the mine had no records of safety concerns or issues but he didn't know whether he would continue working there.

He said his wife Sarah has had enough.

"She's had enough of the heartache but at the end of the day it's what I like doing."

Thursday 18 August 2011

NZ: Appointing mines inspectors 'too little, too late'

Extract from NZCity News

The widow of a man killed in a mining accident on the West Coast five years ago says a decision to appoint more mines inspectors is too little too late

A new High Hazards Unit will be set up with three inspectors and a chief inspector for both the mining industry and the petroleum production industry.

Valma McGowan doubts Labour Minister Kate Wilkinson and Prime Minister John Key have taken everything on board.

"They're saying it's taken 29 lives for the changes. It's taken a damn-sight more than 29 lives. People have been asking, I've been asking them for the last five years," she says.

Ms McGowan says there should be check inspectors at every mine at all times when the mine is operational.

The performance of Department of Labour Mines Inspectors is being defended in an official report into the monitoring of Pike River Mine.

A report commissioned by the department says the inspectors were well qualified, experienced, and had extensive interactions with Pike River Coal prior to last year's disaster.

It says given the size of the mining industry, the Department of Labour's allocation of resources to mine inspection was reasonable.

Meanwhile, official papers suggest other work areas could be at risk by the Government's decision to establish a High Hazards Unit for the mining industry.

A report commissioned by the Department of Labour says the country's overall health and safety inspectorate is small - with around 140 inspectors covering approximately 470,000 enterprises.

The report says it's important to note any significant increase in any high hazard resourcing potentially comes at the expense of other areas of focus.

It also warns securing extra expertise for the high hazard unit will be difficult because of a small talent pool, and strong global demand for those who are qualified to perform such services.

S.Africa: AngloGold reports fatality at Moab Khotsong

Extract from www.miningweekly.com

JOHANNESBURG – All tramming operations at AngloGold Ashanti’s Moab Khotsong mine near Orkney had been stopped after a fatal accident late on Wednesday.

The miner said that a locomotive driver suffered fatal head injuries during the accident, which occurred around midnight.

Africa’s biggest gold producer also reported a fatality at its Mponeng mine last week.

South Africa’s Mining Minister **Susan Shabangu** said on Thursday that she was “very concerned about the continued carnage” on the mines, and singled out gold and platinum mines.

Up to August 15, 76 miners had lost their lives this year, compared with 79 during the same period last year.

WA: Safety fears reignite after Rio miner killed

Extract from Australian Mining

The death of a man at Rio Tinto’s Brockman 2 operation has led to increased scrutiny of safety in the industry.



Rio Tinto yesterday announced that a 27 year old miner had been killed while charging an hydraulic cylinder on a front end loader.

At the time, Rio’s Pilbara operations president Greg Lilleyman said the incident would be

thoroughly investigated, adding that “this is a tragic reminder of the importance of working safely”.

Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union division secretary Gary Wood told The West action needs to be taken following this most recent accident.

There were two miners killed earlier in the year at Port Hedland, where one was crushed to death at BHP Billiton’s iron ore loading facility at Finucane Island, and the other when scaffolding he was standing on collapsed.

“The industry continually tells us that they are working more safely but we are still managing to have fatalities on a regular basis,” Wood said.

“Clearly they have got safety wrong.”

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

B

BACK END

Side section of the coal face remaining after the centre section has been shot out by explosive.

-Ed



Trade & Investment

Industry Assistance Seminars - Mastering Fatigue Management

A series of free seminars on Mastering Fatigue Management will be held between September and November 2011 at Broken Hill, Lithgow, Wollongong, Dubbo, Maitland and Cobar. The seminar program consists of a two day educational workshop. Arrangements can then be made to conduct a one day on-site evaluation on fatigue.

Registration forms are available to download below. Please email completed registration forms to: minesafety.seminars@industry.nsw.gov.au

Further information & Registration Form http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/40212/8/Mastering-fatigue-management-2011.pdf