
Mining Accident News No.0820

Wednesday 17 September 2008

USA: MSHA criticizes ICG over fatal accident

MSHA criticizes ICG over lack of safeguards at WV mine involved in fatal accident

Extract from CNN Money.com, USA

NEW YORK - Federal investigators concluded that an International Coal Group subsidiary lacked safeguards at a West Virginia mine where a miner was killed last May, according to a report issued Wednesday.

Despite the criticism over the death of miner Adam Lanham, the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration did not cite ICG's Wolf Run Mining over the May 30 accident, according to the report. Typically, faults uncovered during a fatal accident investigation can result in a contributing violation and fine.

ICG spokesman Ira Gamm declined to comment.

Lanham, an 18-year-old employee of a contractor, was run over by a piece of heavy equipment that was hauling gravel to patch underground roads at ICG's Sentinel Mine. While the report says Lanham was in an unsafe location, it blames a lack of written policies, procedures and guidelines to make sure people stayed clear of moving equipment at the Barbour County mine.

"The accident occurred because the mine operator did not assure that persons remain clear of moving mobile rubber tired equipment," the report says. "The victim was in an unsafe location while walking ahead of the scoop to the work site. The operator of the scoop did not assure that the victim was positioned a safe distance from the scoop."

Mine management has since altered its comprehensive safety program to address safety around heavy equipment and has retrained employees about the subject, according to the report.

The report also proposes a 293-word safety notice for the mine. Among other things, MSHA wants miners told they're prohibited from walking near a scoop _ the vehicle involved in the accident _ that is being driven from one part of the mine to another.

The state of West Virginia took a harsher view of the accident. Last July, the Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training cited ICG for two violations that state investigators say contributed to Lanham's death.

One citation charges an ICG foreman drove the scoop in an unsafe manner because he was too close to Lanham and allowed him to walk in front of the vehicle. The second charges the foreman violated regulations by operating equipment while supervising Lanham, who had just 33 days of mining experience. State regulations don't allow supervisors to operate equipment while supervising apprentices.

ICG is contesting both state citations.

ICG controls about 1 billion tons of coal reserves in Illinois, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia.

Friday 19 September 2008

South African mine death toll rises as two separate accidents claim more lives

Extract from Mining Weekly Online, South Africa

A number of mineworkers from three different mining operations had died during the past two days, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) spokesperson Lesiba Seshoka confirmed on Friday.

Seshoka said during a telephonic interview that three miners had died at gold producer DRDGold's East Rand Proprietary Mines operation, near Boksburg, on Friday, after a cage had fallen.

DRDGold spokesperson James Duncan, however, said that two workers had died and that the cause of the fatalities was still being investigated.

He noted that while the NUM had stated that a cage had fallen down a shaft, leading to the fatalities, "that has not been confirmed".

The men were found dead in a man conveyance just below the 24 level, about 1 100 m below the surface, of the mine's South West vertical shaft on Friday.

The workers had been conducting routine water-level measurements at the shaft, which was being used only for water pumping purposes.

Meanwhile, AngloGold Ashanti spokesperson Joanne Jones confirmed that a worker at its Savuka mine, in North West province, had died in the early hours of Friday morning.

She said that it seemed that the worker had died in a winching accident, but that an inspection was still ongoing and that details would only be made available later.

Further, Seshoka added that a worker, who was injured in an accident at Anglo Platinum's (Angloplat's) Amandelbult mine in August, had died of his injuries on Thursday.

Angloplat on Monday reported another death at its Amandelbult operation, while a worker had also been killed at Impala Platinum's Rustenburg mine on Wednesday.

The 2008 death toll in South Africa's mining industry had now reached well over 120.

Saturday 20 September 2008

China mine accident kills 5, traps 27

Extract from presstv.ir, Iran

A fire has killed at least 5 workers and trapped 27 others underground at a coal mine in north-eastern China's Heilongjiang province.

The fire suddenly broke out under the mine shaft around 3:30 am (1930 GMT Friday) at the Fuhua mine in Hegang city, when 44 miners were working underground, the State Administration of Work Safety said.

Around a dozen miners escaped but more than 27 were trapped in the mine and 5 others killed.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

The mine is owned by the Fuhua Mining Co. Ltd., a privately-owned business.

China, the world's largest producer and consumer of coal, has the world's deadliest mining industry. An estimated 10,000 people lose their lives annually in China's mining accidents.

According to official figures, about 3,800 miners were killed in China's coal mine incidents last year.

The incidents, many occurring at illegal mines, are often triggered by outdated equipment and poor safety measures.

Eight officials held for fatal mine accident in N China

Extract from www.chinaview.cn, China

TAIYUAN, (Xinhua) -- Eight officials in Xiangfen County in north China's Shanxi Province have been detained for negligence following a fatal mine accident that killed 262.

The provincial procuratorate confirmed on Saturday the officials included Lian Huizhong, head of the county's Taosi Township, Liang Deling, the township legislature director, Liu Weiguang, the township business office



China has the world's deadliest mining industry

director, and three Xiangfen County Safety Production Supervision Bureau officials. Also

held were two county land resources department officials.

Ke Hanmin, chief procurator of Shanxi Provincial Procuratorate, said the officials should be accountable for the accident because they didn't take due care despite knowing about the potential production risks in the Xinta Mining Company. On the morning of Sept. 8, an iron ore waste retaining pond burst and engulfed at least 262 people.

He vowed the procuratorate would render heavy penalties to those found responsible for the accident to protect people's legitimate rights.

USA: Perry County miner killed in bulldozer accident

Extract from Lexington Herald-Leader, Kentucky, USA

An experienced surface coal miner was killed early Friday when the bulldozer he was operating plunged over a 180-foot cliff at a Perry County mine.

Harold Lee Graham, 53, of Campton was killed instantly, according to a preliminary report from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).

Graham was still strapped in the bulldozer when he was found. He probably died of internal injuries, said Kyle Wolfe, a deputy coroner in Perry County.

The accident happened at 1:15 a.m. Friday at an ICG Hazard mine at Ary, near where Perry, Breathitt and Knott counties meet. There is extensive surface mining in the area.

Graham was using a large bulldozer, a Caterpillar D-11N, at the East Mac & Nellie mine to push rock and dirt over a cliff — a highwall, in mining terms — when the dozer fell over into a pit below, according to regulators.

In surface mining, explosives are used to shatter rock covering coal seams. Operators then use heavy equipment to move rock and dirt and load the coal.

There were no eyewitnesses to the accident, according to the federal report. Wolfe, the deputy coroner, said other mine employees noticed Graham was missing and looked for him. Twenty-nine of the mine's 75 employees were at work when the accident happened, according to the MSHA report.

Wolfe said Graham's body had been sent to Frankfort for an autopsy. The autopsy will include a routine screening for alcohol and drugs, but Wolfe said he wasn't aware of any indication that they were involved in the accident.

The cause of the accident was not known Friday. The state Office of Mine Safety and Licensing had scheduled interviews in its investigation for Saturday, said spokesman Jim Carroll.

Graham had been a miner for 30 years and a dozer operator for 20, according to state and federal records.

Graham's death is the fourth coal mining fatality in Kentucky this year — three at surface mines and one underground — and the 20th nationwide. There were only two coal-mining deaths in Kentucky last year, the lowest in state history and the first time there were no underground deaths.

A spokesman for International Coal Group Inc. said the company had no comment beyond a statement confirming Graham's death.

MSHA's data system said ICG Hazard began operating the mine in February 2006. The system does not list any fatalities, serious injuries or large proposed fines for alleged violations at the mine since.

Sunday 21 September 2008

37 dead from gas inhalation in China coal mine: state media

Extract from AFP

BEIJING — Thirty-seven miners died from gas inhalation in a coal mine in central China early on Sunday, state media said, in the latest

disaster to hit the country's notoriously deadly mining industry.



Thirty-seven miners have died from gas inhalation in a coal mine in central China, state media have said.

The deaths occurred in the pre-dawn hours in a coal mine near the city of Dengfeng in Henan province, Xinhua news agency said.

The report said 108 miners had been underground at the time of the "gas outburst". Sixty-four of them escaped, and seven others were later rescued.

China's coal mines are among the most dangerous in the world, with safety standards often ignored in the quest for profits and the drive to meet surging demand for coal -- the source of about 70 percent of the country's energy.

Nearly 3,800 people died in Chinese coal mines last year, according to official figures, although independent monitors say the real figure is probably much higher as many accidents are covered up.

Five miners were confirmed dead and at least 26 others were trapped when a fire broke out Saturday in a coal mine in northeastern China, the official China News Service reported earlier.

That accident occurred in the city of Hegang in Heilongjiang province.

The local work safety authority had not posted an update on that accident on its website Sunday.

Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar

The 18th Annual NSW DPI Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar will be held at the Waterview Convention Centre, Sydney Olympic Park on Thursday 13 and Friday 14 November 2008.

For further information contact Owen Barry on 02 6571 8708 or Bernard Gittins on 02 6360 5351 or email minesafety.seminars@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Eight killed in Tanzania mining accident

Extract from AFP

DAR ES SALAAM — Eight gold miners were killed when sand filled a pit they were excavating in northern Tanzania, police said Saturday.

Mara region police commander Liberatus Barlow said the accident happened because wood used to prevent loose soil from filling the pits had been sawn off by unknown people.

Barlow told AFP six bodies had been pulled out of the mine, run by Canada's Barrick Gold Corporation.



A group of Tanzanian miners rest near a mine

Tanzania's mining sector has expanded rapidly in the past decade since it adopted liberal economic policies in the mid-1980s.

The country has attracted some of the world's major mining concerns, including Barrick Gold Corporation, South Africa's AngloGold, Ghana's Ashanti Goldfields and Australia's Resolute.

Up to 70 people were killed in late March when flash floods swept Tanzanite mining pits also in northern Tanzania.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

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loaming A method of prospecting in which dirt is washed from places chosen systematically around and up the slope of a hill, positive washings indicating the location of the mineral source.

- Ed.