



Commonwealth of Kentucky

Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet

Office of Mine Safety and Licensing

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EMERGENCY AWARENESS BULLETIN

To: All District Supervisors, Inspectors, Analysts and Instructors

From: Ronald H. Hughes, Director, Division of Investigations

Date: July 18, 2007

EAB-07006 - Kentucky Fatal Accident No. 2 - Blasting

On July 16, 2007, at approximately 4:35 p.m., a surface mine mechanic was fatally injured while working on a surface mining operation in Pike County. The victim was located in the parking area of the surface mine when he was struck by fly rock after a shot detonation. Rocks from the shot traveled a distance of approximately 1,600 feet and struck the victim as he was running for cover. The victim was 40 years old with approximately seven years of experience at this mine and twenty years total mining experience.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:

1. The drilling area shall be inspected by a competent person designated by the operator or supervisor for hazards before drilling operations are started.
2. No person shall use explosives in such a manner that safety to persons or property is threatened.
3. Blast holes shall be checked prior to loading to determine the depth and conditions. There should be a defined and consistent method of communication between the driller(s) and the blaster(s) to ensure the blaster is made aware of any unusual conditions regarding drilled holes prior to the loading of explosives.
4. Before a blast is fired, the blaster in charge shall:
 - [a] Greatly enlarge the danger zone for the blast if: 1) A misfire has taken place and the shot has been wired to redetonate the remaining explosives, or 2) The blaster is aware of or suspects cracked holes or voids in the overburden.
 - [b] Make certain that all persons, vehicles, equipment are at a safe distance and under sufficient cover. The last several flyrock events that threatened or impacted people were in instances where the blaster and other personnel thought they were a safe distance away and did not take adequate cover. When unusual conditions exist prior to a blast, a good rule of thumb is for all persons within ½ mile of the blast to take adequate cover, which does not include sitting in a truck.