

Report of Fatality

Machinery

Underground

April 27, 2021

Deceased March 12, 2025

Marfork Coal Company, LLC

Black Eagle Mine

U00300118

Region IV Office

337 Industrial Drive

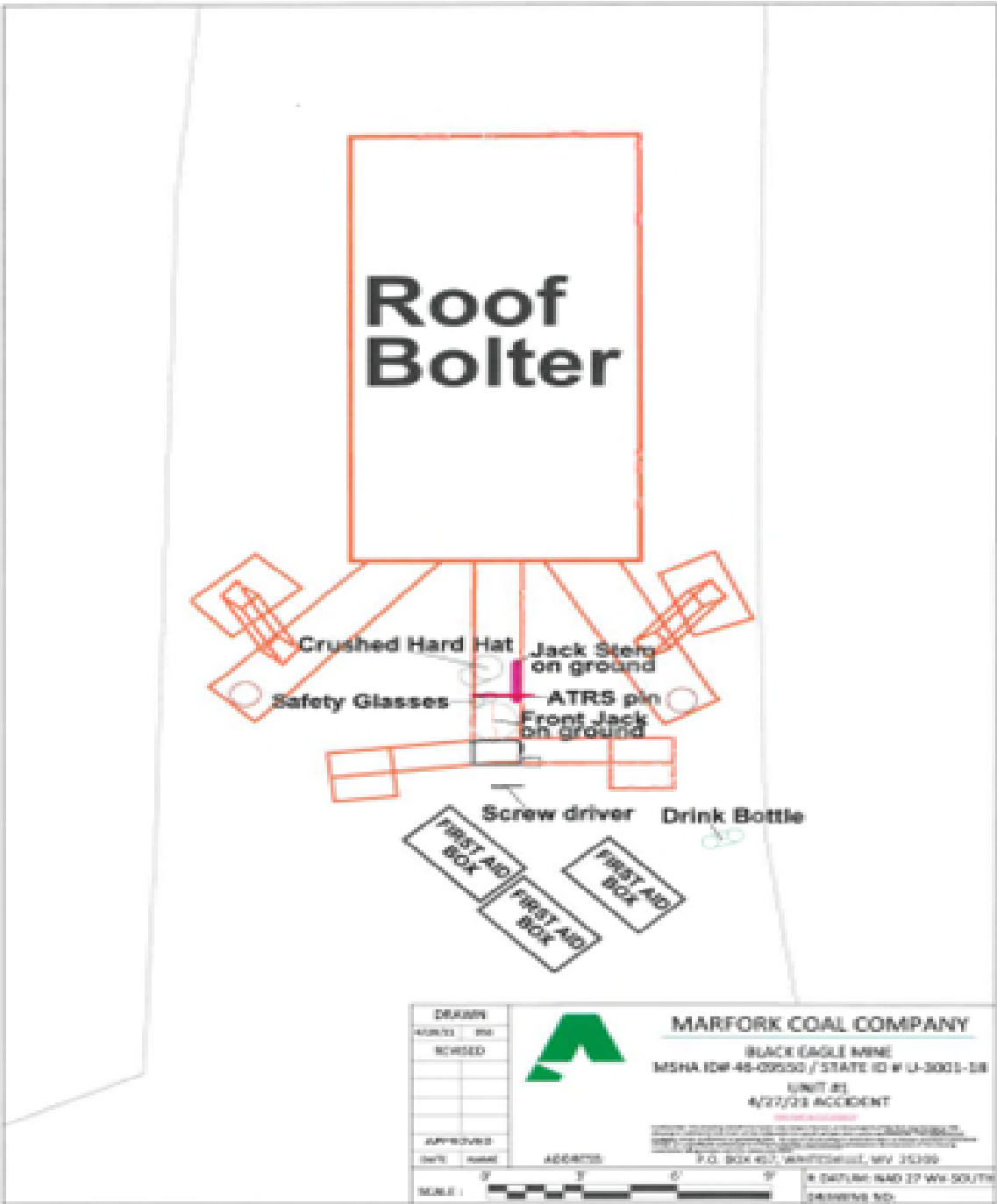
Oak Hill, West Virginia 25901

Christopher Dawson, Inspector-at-Large

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Survey Drawing



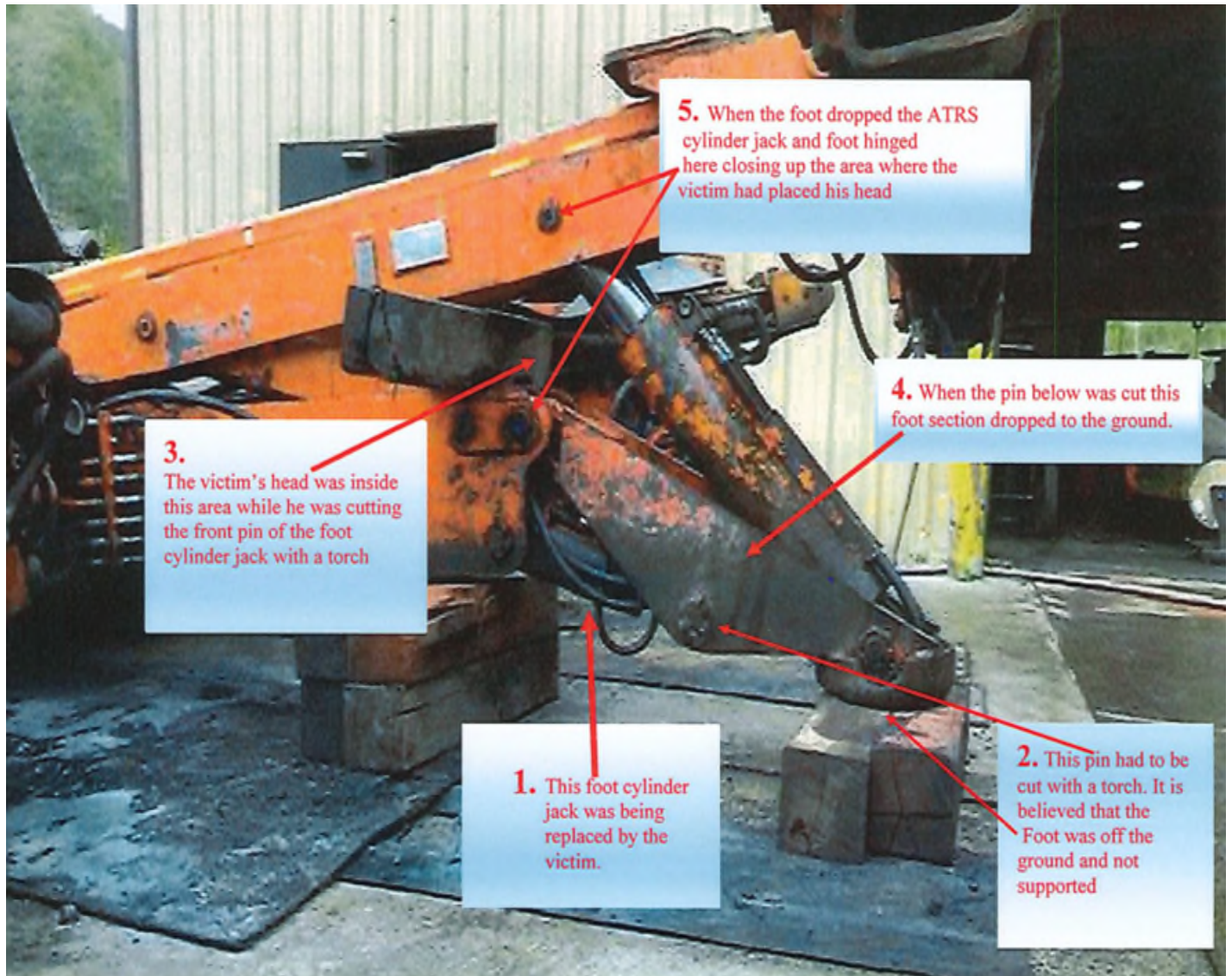
The Map of the Accident Area

Photo 1



The #2 Roof Bolter Involved in the Accident

Photo 2



A Re-Creation of the Placement of the #2 Roof Bolter

Timeline

April 27, 2021

- 3:30 p.m. Mark Hatfield began his shift by attending a safety meeting.
- Approximately 4:00 p.m., Mr. Hatfield and Brian Wall received the part needed to fix the #2 Roof Bolter from the supply company.
- 4:20 p.m. the underground tracking system located Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Wall at #1 Crosscut on #1 Belt.
- 5:37 p.m. the underground tracking system showed Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Wall at #6 Belt.
- 5:39 p.m. the underground tracking system showed Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Wall arriving on the #1 Section.
- 5:42 p.m. Mr. Hatfield is shown by the underground tracking system at the #8 Entry on the #1 Section and Mr. Wall is shown in the #3 Entry where the continuous miner they were assigned to work on was located.
- 6:01 p.m. Mr. Hatfield found he needed the maintenance scoop in order to work on the roof bolting machine and it was being used at the continuous miner, so he went over and helped Mr. Wall work on the continuous miner in the #3 Entry until they were finished with the scoop. The scoop was then moved to the #8 Entry so that Mr. Hatfield could cut the pin out of the foot cylinder of the #2 Roof Bolter. Note: At some time between 6:01 p.m. and 7:25 p.m. the mine's underground tracking system quit working.
- 7:20 p.m. William Massie returned from the outside with more parts for the continuous miner and walked to the #8 Entry.
- 7:28 p.m. Mr. Massie found Mr. Hatfield caught in between components of the Automated Temporary Roof Support (ATRS) and asked for help on the radio.

- 7:36 p.m. Dispatcher, Carlos Gonzalez, called the 911 Center.
- 7:37 p.m. Assistant-Inspector-at-Large, Bobby Harper, issued a verbal control order to mine management over the phone.
- 7:48 p.m. Mr. Hatfield was loaded onto a stretcher and then into a mantrip for transport to the surface.
- 8:23 p.m. Mr. Hatfield arrived on the surface, and at 8:25 p.m., was taken to the baseball field on Packsville Marfork Road by the Whitesville Ambulance Service. He was then transferred to Air Evac Lifeteam 85 for transport to Charleston Area Medical Center.
- March 12, 2025, Mr. Hatfield passed away from injuries sustained in the accident that occurred on April 27, 2021.

General Information

This report is based on an investigation conducted in accordance with Chapter 22A, Article 1, Section 14 of the West Virginia Code.

The Marfork Coal Company, LLC Black Eagle Mine is located at 101 West Grizzly Court, Pettus, West Virginia. At the time of the accident, this underground coal mine had three dual sections operating in the Eagle Coal Seam. The coal seam is approximately forty-two inches thick with an average mining height of six feet. The mine has 146 employees and operates five and a half days per week on average. Normally, the day and evening shifts are production shifts with the midnight shift conducting maintenance activities and performing section belt and power moves.

Mark Hatfield, an employee of Marfork Coal Company, LLC Black Eagle Mine, was seriously injured in an accident occurring at approximately 7:20 p.m. on April 27, 2021. Mr. Hatfield was performing repairs on the #2 Roof Bolter located on the #1 Section when he was caught in a mechanical hinge area of the ATRS on the roof bolter.

At approximately 7:36 p.m., Carlos Gonzalez, the evening shift Dispatcher, received a call from underground that someone was injured and an ambulance was needed. Mr. Gonzalez immediately called 911. The 911 Call Center notified the Mine and Industrial Accident Emergency Operations Center. Bobbie Harper, Region Four Assistant Inspector-at-Large, received the call from the Mine and Industrial Accident Emergency Operations Center at approximately 7:37 p.m.

Mr. Harper contacted the Black Eagle mine and issued a verbal control order pursuant to Title 36, Series 19, Section 7.1.

The West Virginia Miners' Health, Safety and Training inspectors Gene Stewart, Jim Mullins and Jeff Davis were dispatched to the mine where they were joined by Eugene White, Director, John Kinder, Deputy Director, McKennis Browning, Region Four Inspector-at-Large, Bobbie Harper, Region Four Assistant Inspector-at-Large and Wayne Pauley, Region Three Inspector-at-Large. The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training immediately started a joint investigation with the Mine Safety and Health Administration, along with Mine Management.

On March 12, 2025, Mr. Hatfield passed away at the Wythe County Community Hospital in Wytheville, Virginia. Mr. Hatfield was 56 years old at the time of his passing. Mr. Hatfield had a total of 8 years of mining experience and had only worked for 41 days at the Black Eagle mine, as an Outby Electrician.

Accident Description

The Black Eagle Mine evening shift started at 3:30 p.m., on Tuesday April 27, 2021. When the evening shift arrived, the #2 Roof Bolter on the #1 Section was broken down, due to a failed foot cylinder on the ATRS. The foot cylinder failure occurred during the day shift. The cylinder had to be ordered and was delivered to the mine after the evening shift had started. A safety meeting was held with all employees prior to going underground. Mark Hatfield and Brian Wall, who are outby electricians on the evening shift, waited on the surface for the roof bolter parts to arrive. After the parts arrived, Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Wall loaded the parts on a four-wheel rubber tire mantrip and transported them to the #1 Section. They arrived at approximately 5:45 p.m.

After arriving on the section, Mr. Hatfield traveled to the #8 Entry where the #2 Roof Bolter was located, and he tried to remove the pins that mount the foot cylinder in place on the ATRS. When Mr. Hatfield couldn't remove the mounting pins with a hammer, he told William Massie he would need torches to cut the pins out. The torches that Mr. Hatfield was referring to were on the maintenance scoop that was in the #3 Entry. This is also where Electricians Jeff Prunest and Brian Wall were working on the left side continuous miner that had broken down after the start of the evening shift. Mr. Hatfield went to the left side continuous miner and assisted Mr. Wall and Mr. Prunest.

The right-side Section Foreman, Chad Vigilante, moved the maintenance scoop from the #3 Entry to the crosscut between the #8 and #9 Entries. Mr. Vigilante positioned the scoop so the torches could be used to work on the #2 Roof Bolter. As Mr. Vigilante walked back toward the belt entry, he met Mr. Hatfield and informed him the scoop was over at the #2 Roof Bolter. Approximately ten minutes after Mr. Vigilante talked to Mr. Hatfield, he was informed by radio communication that Mr. Massie had the parts for the continuous miner at the end of the track.

Mr. Massie, who operates the #2 Roof Bolter, left the section earlier in the shift at approximately 6:00 p.m. to take two men (Continuous Miner Operator and Shuttle Car Operator) to the #2 Section. After dropping the two men off at the #2 section, Mr. Massie traveled to the surface to pick up the parts needed to repair the left side continuous miner. Mr. Massie transported the parts from the surface and arrived at the end of the track of the #1 Section at approximately 7:20 p.m. Mr. Massie informed Brett Lambert, Scoop Operator, that the parts were at the end of the track. Mr. Massie asked Cory Tolliver if the roof bolter had been fixed, and he was informed that it was not fixed. Mr. Massie walked to the #2 Roof Bolter where he found Mr. Hatfield caught between components of the ATRS. Mr. Massie immediately called Mr. Vigilante on the radio and stated he needed him in the #8 Entry in a hurry and that it was an emergency. Mr. Vigilante immediately left the #6 Face and went to the #8 Entry where the accident occurred. Everyone on the section heard the communications on the radio and went to the roof bolter to assist. When Josh Maitland arrived, Mr. Vigilante was trying to position the maintenance scoop to lift the ATRS on the roof bolter, but it could not be used due to the design of the bucket.

When Mr. Lambert returned to the section from picking up the continuous miner parts from the end of the track, he saw everyone running to the #8 Entry. Mr. Lambert followed them to see what was wrong. After arriving at the roof bolter, Mr. Lambert immediately went back and got the scoop he had been operating, took it to the roof bolter and used it to lift the ATRS to get Mr. Hatfield free from where he was caught between. As soon as Mr. Hatfield was free, Mr. Lambert parked his scoop and went to ensure the emergency rail mounted mantrip was ready for use. Mr. Lambert met everyone at the end of the track and helped load Mr. Hatfield into the emergency mantrip.

After getting Mr. Hatfield stabilized on a backboard, he was transported to the end of the track in the bucket of the section scoop. Mr. Hatfield was transported on the emergency rail mounted mantrip to the surface. While in transit to the surface, additional oxygen supplies were brought in from the surface by Andrew Pauley. The emergency mantrip slowed just long enough to allow Mr. Pauley to hand the oxygen supplies to the people providing care to Mr. Hatfield.

When the emergency mantrip arrived on the surface at 8:25 p.m., Whitesville Ambulance Service took over primary medical care for Mr. Hatfield. Whitesville Ambulance Service transported Mr. Hatfield approximately three-eighths of a mile to the ball field located on Packsville Marfork Road, just off of Route 3. Primary care for Mr. Hatfield was then transferred to Air Evac Lifeteam 85. Air Evac Lifeteam 85 transported Mr. Hatfield to Charleston Area Medical Center.

Findings of Fact

1. Mr. Hatfield was employed as an Outby Electrician at the Black Eagle Mine.
2. The accident occurred at the #2 Roof Bolter (Serial No. 2011136) located in the #8 Entry on the #1 Section near Survey Station #1860.
3. The ATRS foot cylinder was being replaced on the #2 Roof Bolter.

4. Mr. Hatfield cut the front foot cylinder pin with a torch, which allowed the arm assembly to close toward the frame assembly on the ATRS.
5. Mr. Hatfield had his head positioned between the arm assembly and the frame assembly when the pin was cut.
6. When the gap between the arm assembly and frame assembly closed, Mr. Hatfield's head was caught in between them.
7. No type of blocking was in place when the accident occurred.
8. According to testimony under oath, the torch was still burning when Mr. Hatfield was found caught in between the arm assembly and the frame assembly on the ATRS.
9. A scoop was used to lift the ATRS to get Mr. Hatfield free from the area where he was caught between.
10. Mr. Hatfield was working alone. The Section Electrician and another Outby Electrician were working on the left side continuous miner.
11. Mr. Hatfield was issued a Certified Electrician card on December 20, 2019.
12. Mr. Hatfield received New Task Training on Proximity System, Self Contained Self Rescuer, Hearing Conservation Plan and Continuous Personal Dust Monitor Wearer on March 17, 2021.
13. Mr. Hatfield was Tasked Trained on Hand Tools, the Fault Wizard (an electrical tester), Welder, Torches, Service Scoop and Lock and Tag on March 23, 2021.
14. Mr. Hatfield received Hazard Training on March 17, 2021.
15. Mr. Hatfield passed away on March 12, 2025, as a result of injuries sustained in the accident on April 27, 2021.

Conclusion

The victim was working to replace a foot cylinder on the automated temporary roof support system on the #2 Roof Bolter on the #1 Section when the accident occurred. No blocking was installed to prevent movement of the arm and frame assemblies on the ATRS.

Enforcement Action

The following enforcement actions were taken as a result of the investigation that occurred after the accident in 2021.

A non-assessed control order was issued in accordance with Title 36, Series 19, Section 7.1 of the West Virginia Mining Rules and Regulations to preserve evidence following the accident.

A total of 15 violations were issued during the investigation. One was contributory to the fatality.

Recommendations

1. Prior to returning to work, all personnel at the mine will be trained immediately on proper procedures for blocking equipment against potential energy or unexpected movement. The Chief Electrician is the person responsible for conducting this training. The training will be recorded on a 5000-23 form.
2. Prior to returning to work, all personnel will be retrained immediately on proper body positioning when working on and around equipment. This training will be recorded on a 5000-23 form.
3. All personnel at the mine will be Task Trained prior to performing any new task. This training will be recorded on 5000-23 form.
4. Prior to returning to work, all personnel will be retrained immediately on the methods outlined below for changing the ATRS foot cylinder.
 - a) A safety meeting will be held prior to changing the ATRS foot cylinder.
 - b) Blocking under ATRS frame assembly.
 - c) Blocking between the ATRS frame assembly and the ATRS arm assembly.
 - d) Blocking under the ATRS footpad.
 - e) All training will be recorded on a 5000-23 form.

Acknowledgement

The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training acknowledges the cooperation of employees and management of Marfork Coal Company, LLC Black Eagle Mine and the Mine Safety and Health Administration during this investigation.

Marfork Coal Company, LLC employees

Jason Whitehead-COO Alpha Natural Resources	Jeff Prunest-Electrician
Jimbo Nagy-Corporate Director of Maint.	Brian Wall-Outby Electrician
Brian Keaton-Corporate Safety Director	Matthew Fernandez-Electrician
Carl Lucas-President Marfork Coal	Joe Gillenwater-Safety Representative
Tommy Hess-Vice President Marfork Coal	George Gibson-Safety Representative
Paul Thompson-Maintenance Mgr Marfork Coal	Josh Cochran-Left Miner Operator
Mike Vaught-Safety Director Marfork Coal	Josh Maitlan-Roof Bolter Operator
John Workman-Superintendent	Cody Irwin-Day Shift Roof Bolter Operator
Andy Coalson-Mine Foreman	William Massie-Roof Bolter Operator
Andrew Pauley-Evening Shift Foreman	Mike Lovejoy-Shuttle Car Operator

Delmar Laferty-Electrical Supervisor

Corey Tolliver-Shuttle Car Operator

Mike Lipford-Left Side Foreman

Brett Lambert-Scoop Operator

Chad Vigilante-Right Side Foreman

Carlos Gonzalez-Dispatcher

Mine Safety and Health Administration

Jamie Shufflebarger

Robert Hatfield

John Stone

Appendix

- Mine Information Sheet
- Victim Information Sheet

Mine Information

Company Marfork Coal Company, LLC

Mine Name Black Eagle Mine

WV Permit U00300118

Address PO Box 497 Whitesville, WV 25209

County Raleigh

Date Permit Issued December 21, 2018

Working Status Active

Location Near Naoma, WV

Union No

Non-Union Yes

Daily Production 1,427 Clean Tons

Annual Production to Date 128,405 Clean Tons

Total Employees 142

Number of Shifts 3

Name of Coal Bed Eagle Seam

Seam Thickness 42 Inches

Accident Incident Rate 4.73

Lost Time Accidents 2

Type of Haulage Shuttle Cars and Belt

WV OMHST Inspector Jim Mullins

Date of Last Inspection April 17, 2021

Notified By Carlos Gonzalez/Mine Dispatcher

Time of Notification 7:36 p.m.

CMSP Anniversary Date N/A

CMSP Contact Person Michael Vaught

Victim Information

Name of Victim Mark Hatfield

Age of Victim 52 Years

Total Mining Experience 8 Years

Experience at This Mine 6 Weeks

Average Number of Days Worked Per Week 5.5 Days

Average Number of Hours Worked Per Week 54 Hours

Length of Shifts at Mine 9 Hours

Travel Time To/From Work Approximately 1.5 Hours (Each Direction)

Occupation at Time of Accident Outby Electrician

Regular Occupation Outby Electrician

Miner's Certification Underground Miner

Other Certifications Certified Electrician

Date of Accident 27th Day of April 2021 at 7:28 p.m.

Location of Accident Approximately 20' Inby Survey Station #1860 On The #1 Section