

West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety & Training

January 22, 2021

Report of Fatal Coal Haulage Accident

Aracoma Coal Company, Inc.

Davy Branch Mine

Permit No. U00500319

Region Two

830 Virginia Ave.

Welch, West Virginia 24801

Benjamin Hamilton, Inspector-at-Large

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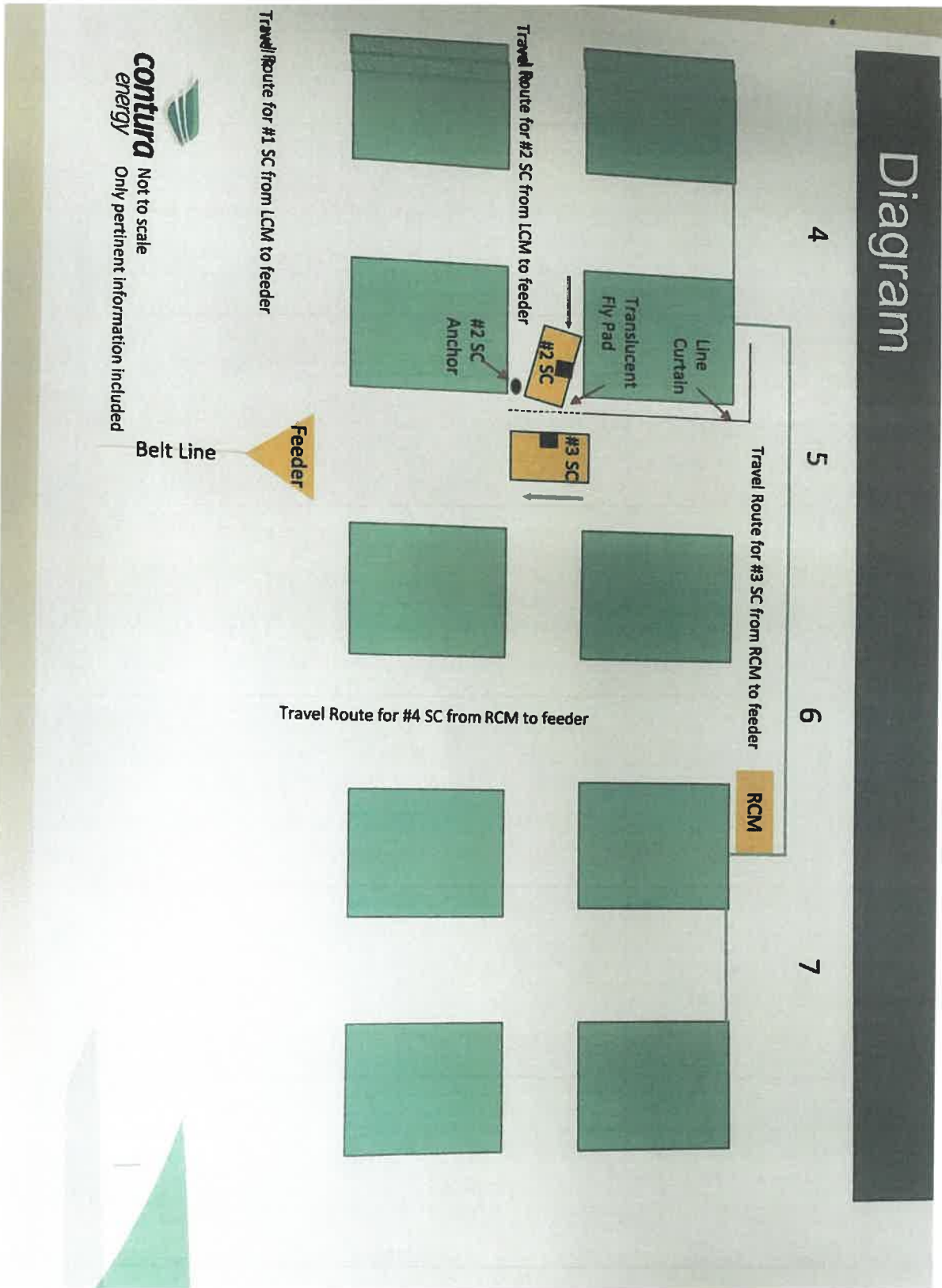
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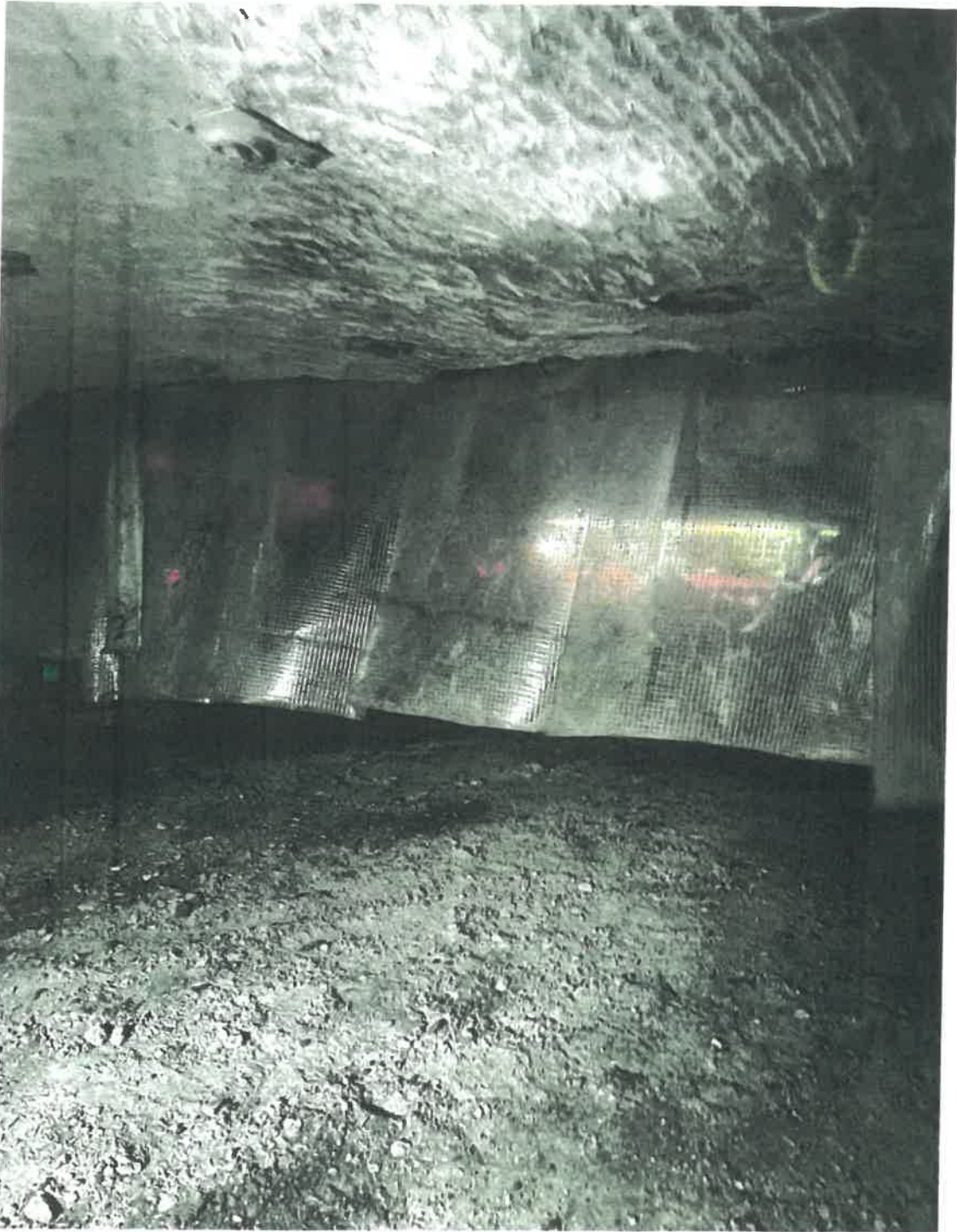




Re-enactment of the accident scene. #2 & #3 Shuttle Car, intersection of entry 4 & 5.

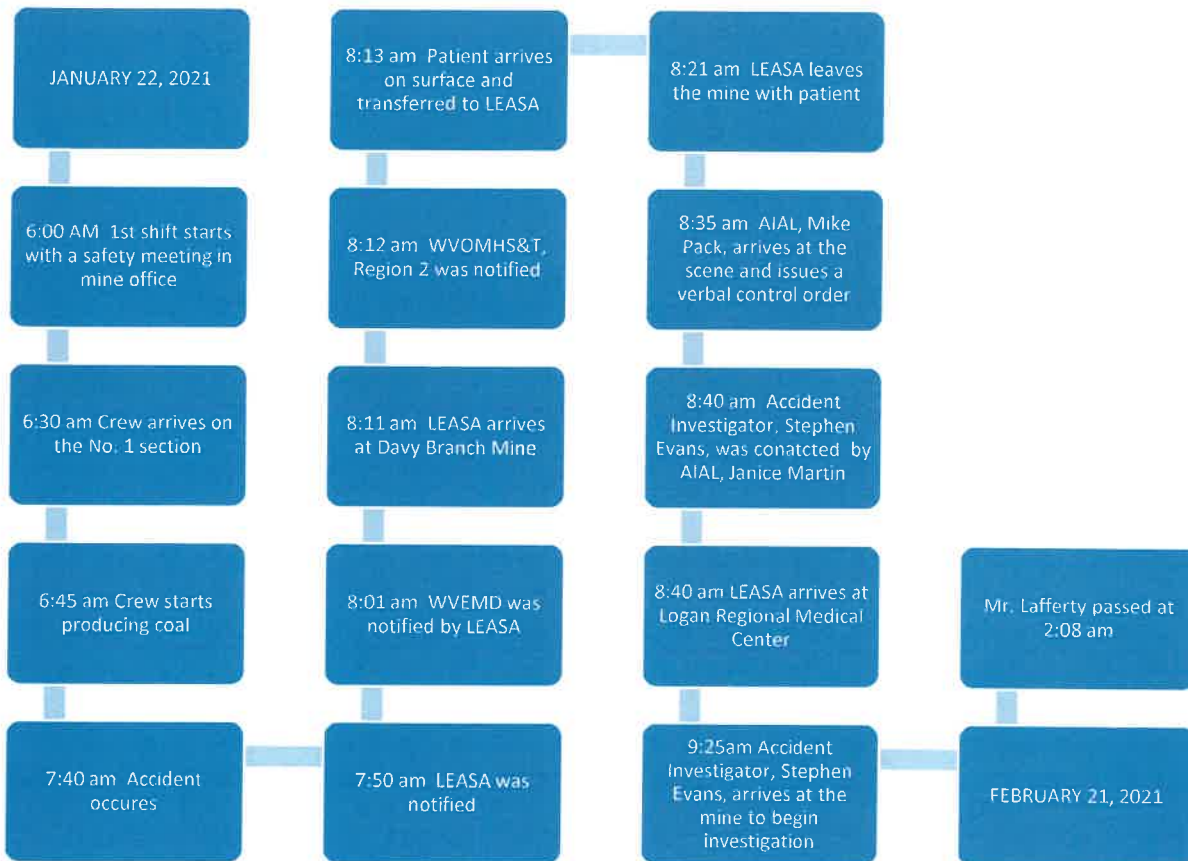


#3 shuttle car at #5 entry



Translucent curtain at the intersection of #4 entry towards #5 entry

TIMELINE



GENERAL INFORMATION

This report is based on an investigation conducted in accordance with Chapter 22A Article 1 section 14 of the Mining Laws of the State of West Virginia.

Justin L Lafferty, 38 years old from Man, WV, was injured in a coal haulage accident that occurred at the Aracoma Coal Company, Inc., Davy Branch Mine, at approximately 7:40 am on January 22, 2021.

Mr. Lafferty was operating the No. 3 Joy shuttle car and had just received a load of coal from the No. 2 continuous miner operating in the No. 6 right crosscut. He then left the continuous miner and trammed toward the dumping point in the No. 5 entry. When he reached the No. 12 cross-cut intersection in the No. 5 entry, he was struck by the No. 2 shuttle car being operated by Mr. Chade B Spaulding, who had received a load of coal from the No. 1 continuous miner in the No. 2 heading. The following information was received from the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner: Mr. Lafferty's cause of death on February 21, 2021, at 2:08 am., was due to pulmonary thromboembolism caused by a blunt impact injury in the lower right extremity from a mining accident.

LEASA was notified at 7:50 am and then LEASA notified WVEMD at 8:01 am. The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training, Region 2 office was notified of the accident by the WVEMD on January 22, 2021 at 8:12 am. A joint investigation with the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training, Mine Safety and Health Administration along with Aracoma Coal Company, Inc. officials was started immediately.

Aracoma Coal Company, Inc. Davy Branch Mine is located on New Route 10 Davy Branch exit in Logan County WV. The Davy Branch Mine operates three 9.50-hour shifts, six days a week and has 57 employees and produces an average of 2800 tons daily.

Mr. Lafferty began employment with Aracoma Coal Company, Inc. Davy Branch Mine in September of 2020. Mr. Lafferty had a total of 11 years of mining experience, 9 years at the Aracoma Coal Company, Inc. Hernshaw Mine and five months at the Davy Branch Mine.

DESCRIPTION

On January 22, 2021 at approximately 7:40 am on the No.1 section, Mr. Lafferty was operating the No. 3 shuttle car (offside, middle drive), and had just received a load of coal from the No. 2 continuous miner operating in the No. 6 right crosscut. Mr. Lafferty was trammng toward to the dumping point in the No. 5 entry. When he reached the intersection in the No. 12 crosscut, in the No. 5, entry he was struck by the No. 2 shuttle car (standard middle drive), being operated by Mr. Chade Spaulding, who was trammng toward the dumping point after receiving a load of coal from the No. 1 continuous miner operating in the No. 2 heading.

Mr. Spaulding stated that while trammng his shuttle car through a set of translucent fly curtains in the No. 5 entry, he heard Mr. Lafferty scream. He then stopped and went to check on Mr. Lafferty upon discovering his shuttle car against Mr. Lafferty, he immediately backed his shuttle car up a few feet and went to retrieve the left side section foreman Shannon Etters.

Eric Blankenship, right side roof bolter operator and Timothy Smith, No. 4 shuttle car operator filling in as the roof bolter operator, were standing in the No. 5 right crosscut and were eyewitnesses to the accident. Mr. Blankenship stated that he heard the bell ring and then heard Mr. Lafferty scream out. Mr. Smith also stated that he heard a bell and Mr. Lafferty scream out. Both Mr. Blankenship and Mr. Smith went to the accident scene. Mr. Blankenship started attending to Mr. Lafferty and Mr. Smith went to get the right side section foreman, Michael Chaffin. Mr. Chaffin, upon arriving on the accident scene, cut the victim's pants leg to assess his injuries.

Mr. Etters, in the meantime went to get the section EMT, Mr. Dan Hensley, as well as report the accident to the dispatcher and report the accident to the mine foreman, Mr. Scott Brown. Mr. Hensley assessed Mr. Lafferty and held traction for a possible back injury while others on the scene put a splint on his right leg and placed Mr. Lafferty on a back board. At this time, Mr. Bob Boehm, who is also an EMT, arrived on the scene and began assessing Mr. Lafferty. Mr. Lafferty was then strapped to the backboard and was administered oxygen, placed on a four-man rubber-tired man trip and transported to the surface. Mr. Lafferty was accompanied to the surface by Eric Blankenship, Bob Boehm and Scott Brown who operated the rubber-tired ride.

Upon arriving on the surface, Logan County EMS was on the scene and took control of Mr. Lafferty at 8:13 am. The paramedics then assessed Mr. Lafferty and left the scene at 8:21 am. Logan County EMS transferred care of Mr. Lafferty to Logan Regional Medical Center at 8:40 am. The following information was received from the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner: Mr. Lafferty's cause of death on February 21, 2021, at 2:08 am., was due to pulmonary thromboembolism caused by a blunt impact injury in the lower right extremity from a mining accident.

FINDING OF FACTS

1. The Aracoma Coal Company, Inc, Davy Branch Mine operates one super section with two continuous miners, four shuttle cars and two roof bolters.
2. A belt move had just been made by the 3rd shift prior to the accident, leaving one open line in front of the dumping point.
3. The No. 2 and No. 3 shuttle cars involved in the accident were sharing the front dumping point in the No. 5 entry.
4. The No. 2 shuttle car was hauling through a set of translucent fly curtains with line curtain attached to them that was being used to ventilate the No. 5 left crosscut in the next line up.
5. Two roof bolter operators were standing in the No. 5 right crosscut and were witnesses to the accident.
6. All witnesses to the accident stated they heard a bell ring before the accident.
7. There were three shuttle cars operating at the time of the accident. The No. 4 shuttle car was parked, and the operator was filling in as a roof bolter.
8. Mr. Lafferty was operating the No. 3 middle drive offside shuttle car.
9. Mr. Spaulding was operating the No. 2 middle drive standard shuttle car.
10. Mr. Lafferty received his 06 underground Coal Miner Card on May 17, 2011.
11. The mine height in this area ranges between 63” and 67”.
12. It was 43” from the translucent curtains to the deck of the No. 3 shuttle car.

CONCLUSION

On January 22, 2021 at 7:40 am Justin L. Lafferty received injuries, while operating a shuttle car on the No. 1 section of the Aracoma Coal Company, Inc., Davy Branch Mine, Mr. Lafferty had just received a load of coal from the No. 2 continuous miner loading in the No. 6 right crosscut and was trammig toward the dumping point in the No.5 entry when he was struck by the No. 2 shuttle car being operated by Mr. Chade Spaulding, who had just received a load of coal from the No. 1 continuous miner loading in the No. 2 heading and was traveling to the dumping point in the No. 5 entry. Mr. Spaulding was starting through a set of translucent fly curtains going into the No. 5 entry when his shuttle car contacted Mr. Lafferty. The following information was received from the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner: Mr. Lafferty's cause of death on February 21, 2021, at 2:08 am., was due to pulmonary thromboembolism caused by a blunt impact injury in the lower right extremity from a mining accident.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

A non-assessed control order was issued, in accordance with Title 36 Series 19 Section 7.1 of the West Virginia Mining Laws, in order to preserve the scene of the accident and to complete an investigation.

This control order was issued to Aracoma Coal Company, Inc., Davy Branch Mine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The West Virginia Office Of Miners' Health, Safety and Training gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the employees and management of Aracoma Coal Company, Inc., Davy Branch Mine and the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

RECOMMENDATION

These changes have been made to page 15 and 36 of the adopted and approved ventilation plan:

- Haulage equipment from different MMU(s) will not share the same intersection where translucent fly curtains are used in conjunction with line curtains
- Anytime a piece of mobile equipment is operated in the active travel ways where translucent fly curtains are used in conjunction with line curtains, communication between operators will be obtained prior to entering the area
- All translucent fly curtains will be constructed of clear material.
- Clear translucent fly curtains will extend across the entire width of the intersection/entry
- Conditions of translucent fly curtains will be observed during required examinations. Any hazards observed will be addressed and recorded in the appropriate book.

MINE INFORMATIONCOMPANY Aracoma Coal Company, IncMINE NAME Davy BranchWV PERMIT U00500319 MSHA PERMIT NO. 46-09574ADDRESS PO Box 1098 Holden WV 25625COUNTY Logan PHONE NUMBER 304-896-9214DATE PERMIT ISSUED 2020WORKING STATUS ActiveLOCATION New Rt. 10 Davy Branch ExitUNION _____ NON-UNION XDAILY PRODUCTION 2800 tonsANNUAL PRODUCTION TO DATE 34,500 tonsTOTAL EMPLOYEES 57 NUMBER OF SHIFTS 3COAL SEAM NAME AND THICKNESS Upper Chilton 40 inchesACCIDENT INCIDENT RATE 0.0 LOST TIME ACCIDENTS 0TYPE OF HAULAGE BeltWVOMHST INSPECTOR Randy CarterDATE OF LAST INSPECTION 1/20/2021NOTIFIED BY Richard WilliamsonNOTIFICATION TIME 7:50 am on 1/22/2021CMSP-ANNIVERSARY DATE 7-20CMSP-CONTACT PERSON Richard Williamson