
West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training

July 19, 2003

Report of an Electrocution Fatality
(Underground Coal Mine)

Performance Coal Company
Upper Big Branch Montcoal Eagle Mine
Permit No. U-3042-92

Region IV Office
142 Industrial Drive
Oak Hill, West Virginia 25901
Gary S. Snyder, Inspector-at-Large

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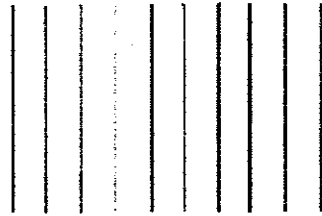
Pressure Pump

Cable Car

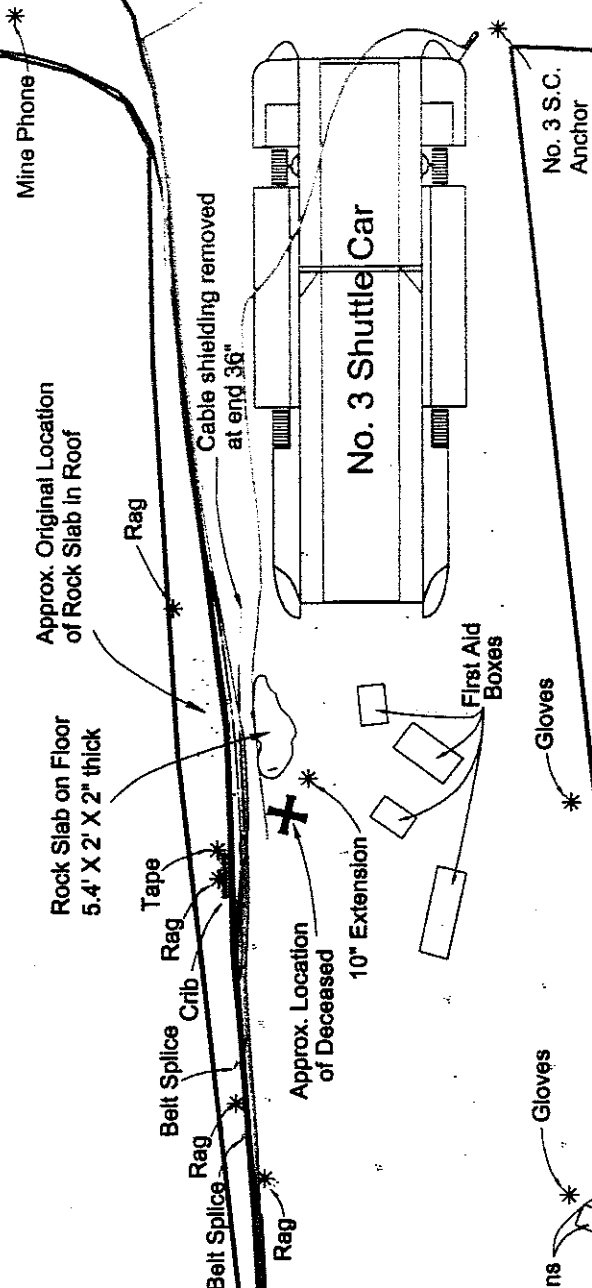
Power Center

Legend

- No. 1 Shuttle Car Cable (#2)
- No. 2 Shuttle Car Cable (#2)
- No. 3 Shuttle Car Cable (#2)
- No. 1 Miner Cable (2/0)
- No. 2 Miner Cable (2/0)
- No. 1 Bolter Cable (#2)
- No. 2 Bolter Cable (#2)
- Feeder Cable (1/0)
- Scoop Charger (#2)
- Pressure Pump (#6)



No. 3 Shuttle car
Cathead unplugged
and locked out



Hyd. Oil Cans
Rag

Gloves

Gloves

No. 3 S.C.
Anchor



PERFORMANCE COAL COMPANY
 P.O. BOX 69
 NAOMA, WV 26140
UPPER BIG BRANCH MINE - SOUTH
 MSHA ID. 48-08438 STATE ID. U-3042-92
 Sketch of Accident Site Involving Fatality
 Saturday, 07-19-03, Approx. 8:15 PM at
 HEADGATE NO. 17 - In Crosscut Between Headings
 No. 3 & No. 4, Near No. 3 Entry Center Line Station No. 16879
 Deceased's Name - Rodney Sourlock

Note: This Sketch depicts the accident site after the recovery activities took place.

Scale 1"= 10'

Revised: 4:20 p.m. on 7-21-03
Drawing by H.S.C. 07/21/03

**REPORT OF AN ELECTROCUTION FATALITY
PERFORMANCE COAL COMPANY
UPPER BIG BRANCH MONTCOAL EAGLE MINE
PERMIT NO. U-3042-92**

GENERAL INFORMATION

A fatal electrical accident occurred at approximately 6:05 p.m. on July 19, 2003 at Performance Coal Company, Upper Big Branch Montcoal Eagle Mine (U-3042-92) located at Montcoal in Raleigh County. The accident occurred on the Headgate 17 section in the crosscut between No. 3 and No. 4 entries about thirty-five feet from station spad 16879, near the section dumping point. Mr. Rodney A. Scurlock, II, age 27, was electrocuted while performing duties as a certified electrician. He was preparing to splice a shuttle car cable that was apparently damaged by falling rock.

Homer Wallace, mine superintendent, notified Gary S. Snyder, Inspector-at-Large of the WV Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training, Oak Hill office, of the accident at 6:55 p.m. on July 19, 2003. A joint investigation with the Mine Safety and Health Administration was started immediately.

DESCRIPTION

Performance Coal Company was issued a permit to operate the Upper Big Branch Montcoal Eagle mine on November 2, 1994. Currently, the mine employs a total of 171 persons and has two continuous miner sections and one longwall section. Coal is mined from the 60" Eagle coal seam with an average mining height of 80 inches. The miner sections produce coal five or six days a week and the longwall section operates seven days a week. Coal is produced on nine-hour day and evening shifts overlapping into the midnight shift. The remainder of the midnight shift is used for maintenance.

On Saturday July 19, 2003, the evening shift crew for Headgate 17 miner section entered the mine at 4:05 p.m. under the direction of Richard C. Kim, production foreman. The crew traveled by rail to the section mantrip station where the foreman instructed the crew about the equipment locations and the mining cycle planned for the shift. He reviewed the roof control plan and, after a brief prayer, the crew walked up No. 4 entry and started work on the section.

Lawrence Deal, scoop operator, and Joel Price, utility man, went four or five breaks outby the section to get supplies and the foreman examined the working places. Brian Scurlock, miner operator, examined the right miner and started loading coal from the belt entry, No. 3 working place. Randall Kirk, center (No. 2) shuttle car operator, hauled coal in the belt entry, while Bobby Kirk, right (No. 3) shuttle car operator, added two cans

of oil to the right (No. 3) shuttle car. Kenneth Chapman and Earl Waddell, the roof bolting crew, started roof bolting in No. 1 entry with the left (No. 1) roof bolter. They installed three or four rows to finish bolting this working place.

Mr. Kirk finished putting oil in the No. 3 shuttle car and hauled two or three loads of coal until the No. 3 shuttle car circuit breaker tripped. The No. 3 shuttle car had de-energized while dumping at the feeder, which blocked the No. 2 shuttle car from dumping. Rodney A. Scurlock, II, section electrician, tried several times but failed to reset the tripped circuit breaker. Mr. Scurlock and Bobby Kirk found that a piece of rock had fallen from the roof and damaged the No. 3 shuttle car cable in the crosscut between the belt entry and the section power center. Together these two men removed the rock from the cable. The electrician locked out power at the cathead and made a temporary splice in the cable to facilitate moving the disabled shuttle car from the section feeder. Bobby Kirk found that the No. 3 shuttle car would not start after the temporary splice was completed, however the shuttle car lights would turn "on". Mr. Kim instructed Randall Kirk to use the center shuttle car to pull the disabled No. 3 shuttle car out of the dumping area.

Randall Kirk trammed the loaded No. 2 shuttle car around the block and Brian Scurlock connected the load ends of both shuttle cars with chain. Production resumed once the disabled No. 3 shuttle car was pulled off the dump. Brian Scurlock completed mining the cut in No. 3 entry and trammed the right mining machine to No. 4 entry. The roof bolting crew came to No. 3 entry to begin roof bolting there, but found the right roof bolting machine needed oil. The foreman began operating the left mining machine loading coal from No. 2 left crosscut. Bobby Kirk operated the left No. 1 shuttle car, while Rodney Scurlock prepared to splice the damaged No. 3 shuttle car cable.

Brian Scurlock needed help clearing the right miner cable from the roadway. He walked to the crosscut where the electrician was gaining slack in the No. 3 shuttle car cable, and asked his brother, Rodney Scurlock if he had seen Lawrence Deal, the scoop operator. The electrician was pulling cable slack over the No. 3 shuttle car and answered he had not seen the scoop operator. Brian Scurlock noticed the time was 6:03 p.m., turned and walked a short distance toward the right miner in No. 4 entry and met Mr. Chapman who was looking for oil. Mr. Chapman asked Brian Scurlock where oil might be found, and walked a short distance to the area where the electrician was working. Mr. Chapman saw Rodney Scurlock, the electrician, lying on his back, unconscious with the No. 3 shuttle car cable on his chest and in his right hand. He yelled and Brian Scurlock, who was still nearby, came to the accident scene. Mr. Chapman warned Brian Scurlock not to touch the victim because of the potential electrical danger. Mr. Chapman left to gather the section crew.

Brian Scurlock kicked the cable off the victim. He felt an electrical shock as he lifted the victim's head out of water to start CPR. Mr. Kim, the foreman, arrived at the accident scene and took charge of the victim's medical care, while Randal Kirk called outside to report the accident. Mr. Waddell brought the first aid boxes to the scene and assisted with CPR.

Randall Kirk also assisted with CPR. He felt an electrical shock near the victims lower left extremity as he finished CPR, and then went to the section transformer and de-energized it by pushing the emergency stop button. Mr. Price, utility man and Mr. Deal, scoop operator arrived back on the section after the accident had occurred. They helped the crew secure the victim onto a stretcher and carry the victim down No. 4 entry to the track mantrip. CPR continued as the victim was transported to the surface where an ambulance was waiting.

The Whitesville Volunteer Fire Department transported the victim to the Raleigh General Hospital in Beckley, West Virginia where he was pronounced dead at 10:20 p.m. by Dr. Richard Pitt.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. No. 3 shuttle car cable being worked on by the victim was de-energized and locked-out, but not tagged. The cable was cut in two at a temporary splice.
2. Muddy water, mud and wet conditions existed at the accident scene.
3. A three-phase, 460 volt AC # 2 AWG cable powered the No. 1 shuttle car. Two damaged places were found in the insulation of No. 1 shuttle car cable. Both damaged places were located near the accident scene and both leaked current when tested with a volt-ohm meter. Each damaged place on the cable exposed a different un-insulated phase conductor.
4. Several energized power cables were laying in the area where the accident occurred. They included the left miner cable, the feeder cable, the No. 1 shuttle car cable, and the No. 2 shuttle car cable. However, only the energized No. 1 shuttle car cable was damaged at the accident scene.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Rodney A. Scurlock, II was electrocuted when he contacted the exposed power source of the No. 1 shuttle car cable. The cable was energized in the area where he was working to repair the de-energized, locked-out No. 3 shuttle car cable.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION

A non-assessed control order was issued in accordance with Chapter 22A, Article 2, Section 68 of the WV Code to preserve evidence following the accident.

The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training, issued seven (7) notices of violation to Performance Coal Company during this investigation. One violation was considered to have contributed to the accident. The contributing violation was issued to Performance Coal Company and was written as follows:

Notice of Violation; Chapter 22A, Article 2, Section 40(37):

The No. 2 AWG (480 volt AC) trailing cable of the No. 1 shuttle car, located on the 17 Headgate section, had two (2) damaged places exposing the outside and center power conductors. This condition was found on July 21, 2003 during a fatal accident investigation. This accident occurred on July 19, 2003.

Also, at another location, a damaged place existed in this cable exposing the inner insulated grounding conductor and two (2) insulated power conductors.

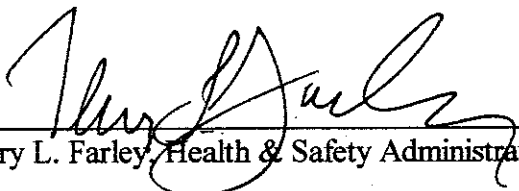
RECOMMENDATIONS

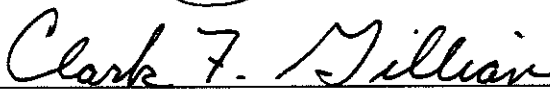
1. Select a safe, dry work area at a location away from other power sources when performing any temporary or permanent cable repairs.
2. If a safe, dry work area is not available that is away from other energized power sources, then de-energize all other power sources in the work area before performing any temporary or permanent cable repairs.
3. All persons shall be retrained concerning the above recommendations.


ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted:


Terry L. Farley, Health & Safety Administrator 9-26-03
Date


Clark F. Gillian, Deep Mine Inspector 9-19-03
Date


Thomas E. Harmon, Electrical Inspector 09-18-03
Date

APPENDIX

- Mine Information Sheet
- Victim Information Sheet
- Persons Present During Investigation and Interviews

MINE INFORMATION

COMPANY Performance Coal Company

MINE NAME Upper Big Branch Montcoal Eagle

WV PERMIT U-3042-92

ADDRESS P. O. Box 69, Naoma, West Virginia 25140

COUNTY Raleigh

DATE PERMIT ISSUED November 2, 1994 WORKING STATUS Active

LOCATION near Montcoal

UNION _____ NON-UNION Yes

DAILY PRODUCTION 10,000 tons

ANNUAL PRODUCTION TO DATE 1,800,000 tons

TOTAL EMPLOYEES 171 NUMBER OF SHIFTS 3

NAME OF COAL BED Eagle

SEAM THICKNESS 60"

ACCIDENT INCIDENT RATE 7.73 LOST TIME ACCIDENTS 8

TYPE OF HAULAGE Belt

WV OMHST INSPECTOR Robert Cozart

DATE OF LAST INSPECTION June 26, 2003

NOTIFIED BY Homer Wallace, Superintendent

TIME OF NOTIFICATION 6:55 p.m., July 19, 2003

CMSP – ANNIVERSARY DATE November 11, 2003

CMSP – CONTACT PERSON George Nelson

VICTIM INFORMATION

NAME OF VICTIM Rodney Alan Scurlock, II

ADDRESS P.O. Box 672, MacArthur, West Virginia 25873

AGE 27 SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER [REDACTED]-2988

TOTAL MINING EXPERIENCE 33 months

EXPERIENCE AT THIS MINE 22 months

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS WORKED PER WEEK 6

AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK 54 PER DAY 9

LENGTH OF SHIFTS AT MINE 9 TRAVEL TIME TO/FROM WORK 45 minutes

OCCUPATION AT TIME OF ACCIDENT Electrician

REGULAR OCCUPATION Electrician

COAL MINER'S CERTIFICATION 4-10509

OTHER CERTIFICATIONS 3-290 Certified Electrician

SPOUSE'S NAME N/A

DEPENDENTS none

DATE OF ACCIDENT 19th DAY OF July, 2003

AT 6:05 O'CLOCK p.m.

CAUSE OF ACCIDENT: Mr. Rodney A. Scurlock, II was electrocuted by a defective

No. 1 shuttle car cable energized in the area where he was working to repair the

de-energized No. 3 shuttle car cable.

DATE OF DEATH: 19th DAY OF July, 2003

INVESTIGATION

The following persons were present during the on-site investigation conducted on July 19 and 20, 2003:

PERFORMANCE COAL COMPANY

Bill Potter	President
Barry Hale	General Manager
Frank Foster	Safety Coordinator
Wendell Wills	Mine Foreman
Keith Hainer	Maintenance Manager
George Nelson	Safety Director
Paul Thompson	Chief Electrician
William McCall	Chief Electrician
Dean Jones	Block Superintendent
Richard Kim	Section Foreman
Shane Harvey	Corporate Council

MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Larry Cook	Supervisor Electrical Engineer
Marcus Smith	Electrical Engineer
Roger Richmond	Accident Investigator

WV OFFICE OF MINERS' HEALTH, SAFETY AND TRAINING

Terry L. Farley	Health & Safety Administrator
Gary S. Snyder	Inspector-at-Large
Clark F. Gillian	Deep Mine Inspector
Thomas E. Harmon	Electrical Inspector
Michael Rutledge	Safety Instructor

INTERVIEWS

The following persons were present during the interviews conducted on July 21, 2003:

PERFORMANCE COAL COMPANY

Bill Potter	President
Frank Foster	Safety Coordinator
Richard Kim *	Section Foreman
Bobby Kirk *	Shuttle Car Operator
Kenneth Chapman *	Roof Bolter Operator
Randall Kirk *	Shuttle Car Operator
Joel Price *	Utility Man
Lawrence Deal *	Scoop Operator

Dave Hardey Corporate Council

The following persons were interviewed on July 29, 2003:

Earl Roles *	Electrician
Robert Alderman *	Electrician
Ronnie Stiltner *	Electrician
Earl Waddell *	Roof Bolter Operator

The following person was interviewed on July 31, 2003:

Brian Scurlock *	Continuous Miner Operator
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*denotes persons interviewed

MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Ray Saunders	Supervisor
Larry E. Cook	Supervisor, Electrical Engineer
Roger Richmond	Accident Investigator

WV OFFICE OF MINERS' HEALTH, SAFETY AND TRAINING

C. A. Phillips	Deputy Director
Terry L. Farley	Health & Safety Administrator
Gary S. Snyder	Inspector-at-Large
William Tucker	Assistant Inspector-at-Large
Clark F. Gillian	Deep Mine Inspector
Robert Cozart	Deep Mine Inspector