

West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training

July 27, 2011

Report of a Fatality by Electrocution
(Preparation Plant)

Superior Processing, Inc.
Superior Preparation Plant
Permit No. L-839

Region II Office
891 Stewart Street
Welch, West Virginia 24801
John O'Brien, Assistant Inspector-at-Large
Steve Stanley, Electrical Inspector

Table of Contents

Description.....	3
General Information.....	3
Fatal Accident Investigation.....	3-5
Findings of Fact.....	5
Conclusion.....	6
Photographs.....	6-8
Sketch.....	9
Enforcement Action.....	10-26
Certification.....	27
Recommendations.....	28-29
Appendix.....	30-33

**Report of a Fatality by Electrocution
Superior Processing, Inc.
Superior Preparation Plant
Permit No. L-839**

Description

A fatal accident occurred at 8:30 p.m. on July 27, 2011, at Superior Processing Inc., Superior Preparation Plant, Superior, McDowell County, WV. The accident occurred at an elevated location eight feet above the filter floor. Jason Eric Stacey, age 40, a contractor with seventeen years' experience and employed by Mike Dover Corporation, was electrocuted while welding a metal pipe. Mr. Stacey came in contact with an energized welding electrode.

Donnie Coleman, a safety consultant for Superior Processing, Inc., notified Inspector-at-Large Greg Norman at the Welch Region Two Office of the accident at 8:35 p.m. Assistant Inspector-at-Large John O'Brien and Electrical Inspector Steve Stanley were dispatched promptly to the accident site. A joint investigation with the Mine Safety and Health Administration started shortly thereafter.

General Information

Superior Processing Inc.'s Superior Preparation Plant is located at Superior, WV off Rt. 52 in McDowell County. The plant was re-permitted on November 15, 2004, under permit number L-839. The plant employs a total of fifteen persons on two shifts. Ten employees worked on day shift (7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), and five employees worked on the evening shift (4:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.) Coal is processed from one surface and four underground mines.

The contractor, Mike Dover Corporation, was initially contracted on June 9, 2010, by Superior Processing Inc. It employed a total of five persons at this plant, including the victim. The five persons were employed on the day shift from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They worked nine days straight and then had five days off.

Fatal Investigation of Accident

On July 27, 2011, contractor foreman Jason Eric Stacey employed by Mike Dover Corporation, began his shift at 7:00 a.m. at Superior Preparation Plant. Normally his shift would have ended at 5:00 p.m., but Mr. Stacey and the four other workers worked over to finish the job connecting a ten inch pipe to a fourteen inch main return pipe going to the thickener. Approximately an hour prior to the accident, Mr. Stacey traveled up by ladder to the location near the ceiling eight feet above the filter floor. He was there to measure everything and wash down the area to prevent a fire. Mr. Stacey had Kevin Riley cut pieces of pipe so he could piece them together around the connection. Mr. Stacey came down once to cool off because he said, "It is too hot up there." On the filter floor, Marcus Green and Kevin Riley welded the pipe that

was to be installed overhead. When Mr. Green and Mr. Riley finished, they went outside and told Mr. Stacey that they were ready for him to come back.

Mr. Stacey climbed up the ladder and rested his left foot on top of a gate valve, with his knees toward his chest. Due to the modifications being made to this area, the lights at this location were de-energized. The filter floor received sufficient light from the new part of the plant to allow the men to work at this location without cap lights. The area near the ceiling of the filter floor where Mr. Stacey was to weld was dark; therefore, he used an LED cap light to illuminate the location of the pipe connection. The workers tried to do most of the work during daylight hours. A 480 single phase Miller Welder, the shop welder, located on the first floor of the plant was used during this job. The lead wire was not of sufficient length to reach the location on the filter floor. So, another cable was connected to this cable by using a stinger to clamp them together, and electrical tape was used to insulate this connection. Mr. Green sent a piece of 90° pipe up to Mr. Stacey by a chain pull, and Mr. Stacey proceeded to tack welded this in place. Mr. Stacey then cut the hole in the fourteen inch pipe. Mr. Green ran down to get some water, and when he came back, Mr. Stacey was yelling for Mr. Green to hand up him the welding hood and stinger as he was getting ready to weld the pieces in place. Mr. Stacey stated he would need some more rods because he did not have enough. Lonnie Riley was sent to get more welding rods.

Mr. Green and Mr. Kevin Riley stood at the bottom of the ladder waiting on Mr. Stacey to start welding. They heard Mr. Stacey strike an arc; however, they did not hear anything else at this time. They were talking to each other. About two minutes went by, and they never heard anything else. Mr. Green called out to Mr. Stacey to see if he was all right yet received no response. Kevin Riley reached over and shook Mr. Stacey's foot, and he still didn't respond. Mr. Green then shined his flashlight into Mr. Stacey's face and saw Mr. Stacey's head slumped down and his eyes closed. Mr. Green then yelled for Lonnie Riley to kill the welder two floors down and to get help.

Kyle McCoy and Tom Blankenship, located in another part of the plant below this floor, were installing a motor when they heard Mr. Green yell to call 911. Mr. McCoy then yelled at Jackie Ratliff, located below him, who called 911.

Mr. Green attempted to pull the excess welding cable and stinger from around Mr. Stacey while they were located on the filter floor, but the stinger would not come loose. Mr. Green and Mr. Kevin Riley went to where Mr. Stacey was positioned, and Mr. Green manually detached the stinger from the rod. Mr. Green then took Mr. Stacey's welding helmet off letting his head fall back, and the rod fall out of his mouth. Mr. Stacey was clenching a piece of metal in his left hand. Mr. Green then ran to the top floor into raw coal to get help. When he returned, Mr. Green assisted Mr. Kevin Riley with removing Mr. Stacey and lowering him to where Lonnie Riley, Kyle McCoy, Tom Blankenship and others were located on the filter floor. Tom Blankenship immediately checked Mr. Stacey's vitals: he was not breathing and had no pulse. Mr. Blankenship then checked Mr. Stacey's airway and stated that Mr. Stacey had burns

on his mouth and tongue. Mr. Blankenship then administered CPR for approximately 15 to 20 minutes until the ambulance arrived.

The ambulance personnel removed Mr. Stacey's shirt finding no visible burns on his chest. Mr. Stacey was transported to Welch Community Hospital by the McDowell County Ambulance Authority and was pronounced dead on arrival by Sherwood P. Leo, M.D.

The medical examiner's Certificate of Death dated July 28, 2011 and signed by the Deputy Chief Medical Examiner, Hamada E. Mahmoud, M.D., stated the cause of death was electrocution.

Finding of Facts

1. Jason E. Stacey had a total of seventeen years' experience and had worked for Mike Dover Corp. a total of twelve years. He was certified as a construction foreman on February 17, 2005 and a certified welder. Mr. Stacey was the foreman at this site and supervised four persons. Several of the employees of the contractor stated that Mr. Stacey was a better welder than they are.
2. Tests were conducted on the incoming welder voltage (primary side) and on the welder output (secondary side or DC side). The voltage and amperage were checked during idle welding and during welding with the electrode stuck to the metal. All tests conducted were within the normal perimeters.
3. Mr. Stacey's work location was not properly illuminated. The regular lights that were installed at the filter floor location had to be de-energized due to modifications being made to a wall where the power cables for the light were located. Mr. Stacey's only light was a LED light on his hard hat which he hung over the location where he was to weld.
4. Sufficient ventilation was not provided near the ceiling of the filter floor. Mr. Stacey took breaks often and stated to co-workers, "It is too hot up there." Co-workers Marcus Green and Kevin Riley stated they were covered with sweat because of the existing heat.
5. Mr. Stacey had approximately three feet of excess welder cable pulled up near his body. There were a total of 18 bare places observed in the welder cable with the one closest to Mr. Stacey located about five feet from the stinger.

Conclusion

Jason E. Stacey had worked a total of thirteen and one half hours prior to the accident. The location where he was working was not well ventilated or illuminated, and he was working in an awkward position.

The welder cable that he was using was found to have eighteen openings with the nearest one being located approximately five feet from the stinger. Mr. Stacey had several feet of excess welder cable pulled up near his body as he was welding.

This location had also been sprayed down with water prior to cutting an opening in the fourteen inch pipe to prevent fires.

Photographs

- No. 1 The victims hat and light.
- No. 2 The improper connection of the 1st welding lead to the 2nd lead.
- No. 3 Someone is illustrating the victim's body position at the accident site.
- No. 4 Two of the eighteen openings found in the welding lead.
- No. 5 An overall view of the accident site.
- No. 6 Close up of the accident site.
- No. 7 The shop welder's ground connection to the prep plants super structure.
- No. 8 The shop 480 VHC Welder.

