



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

OFFICE OF MINERS' HEALTH, SAFETY AND TRAINING  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, LABOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

GASTON CAPERTON  
GOVERNOR

STEPHEN F. WEBBER  
DIRECTOR

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** ALL WEST VIRGINIA UNDERGROUND COAL OPERATIONS  
**FROM:** STEPHEN F. WEBBER, DIRECTOR *S.F.W.*  
**DATE:** APRIL 4, 1994  
**RE:** FATAL ACCIDENT / FLETCHER ROOF BOLTER

On March 25, 1994 West Virginia experienced our third fatal accident in two years, where the fast feed on the roof bolter's boom was a major factor.

In the latest accident, on a Fletcher double-head bolter, the pin on the fast feed lever backed out and became stuck over the pin on the floor jack lever. When the floor jack was activated, the bolter's boom raised at fast speed causing crushing injuries to the victim's head area. The pins on the back valve bank were equipped with holes and carter keys were used as fasteners.

As you may recall after the last fatal accident where the fast feed was a factor, the manufacturer offered free kits to replace the lever pins with C-clip fasteners on all of the front valve bank levers. However, the offer did not extend to the lever pins on the back valve bank.

As a result of the latest fatal accident involving the fast feed the Mine Health and Safety Administration (MSHA), and the West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training (MHS&T) are forming a committee to study the use of the fast feed on roof bolters to determine the safety and hazards associated with its use. The committee hopes to finish its work within three weeks of commencing its work.

After reviewing the three fatal accidents in West Virginia where the fast feed was a factor, I am convinced the hazards associated with having the fast feed on roof bolters far out weigh any time efficiency, or production that may be gained by its use. Further, in my opinion, the joint MSHA and MHS&T committee will

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I have a very strong concern that the industry could experience another fatal accident resulting from the fast feed, and possibly even before the committee finishes its work.

For all of the above reasons, I strongly urge operators to disconnect or otherwise take out of service the fast feed on all roof bolters in the state, until the joint committee can finish its work, their findings analyzed, and appropriate recommendations implemented.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, or the recommendations made, please feel free to contact me at (304) 558-1425.

SFW:ks