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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
BUREAU OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF MINERS' HEALTH, SAFETY AND TRAINING

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Gaston Caperton
Governor

James B. Lawrence
Commissioner

Stephen F. Webber
Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Inspectors-at-Large
FROM: Stephen F. Webber, Director *Steve*
DATE: September 28, 1995
RE: Roof Fall Accidents

During the past sixteen (16) months, three (3) WV coal miners have died in roof fall accidents resulting from working inby permanent roof supports. The most recent accident occurred on September 18, 1995 when a continuous miner operator proceeded inby permanent supports as he was operating a continuous mining machine via remote control.

All mine operators, mine supervisory personnel, and miners should be reminded that the position of the WV Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training since May, 1992 has been that a permanent withdrawal of certification will be sought against any person found to be working inby permanent supports. This policy applies to any miner or supervisory person who has knowledge of such practices and takes no corrective measures.

It should be noted that a petition for a permanent withdrawal of certification initiated by this agency was recently upheld by the WV Coal Mine Safety Board of Appeals.

Working inby supports has not only resulted in the deaths of three (3) miners during the last sixteen (16) months, but has exposed others to the same hazard while engaged in rescue and recovery efforts following each accident. All mine operators, mine supervisory personnel and miners should be reminded that the provisions prohibiting work inby permanent supports make no exceptions for emergency rescue and recovery work and MHS&T will initiate decertification action for those who enter inby roof support while doing recovery work. This practice is extremely dangerous in that a roof fall would already have occurred.

Also, the attached survey should be disseminated to all your inspectors and should be returned to Doug Conaway.

SFW:ks
Attachment