

Agency Accomplishments

Load-Locking Valves Now Required

A new regulation became effective on October 15, 1996 requiring load-locking valves for the boom and head lift cylinders of all continuous mining machines and loading machines. The Board of Coal Mine Health and Safety passed this law as the result of two mining fatalities that occurred in WV, in December 1995 and January 1996. The regulation was added to the existing Title 36, Series 18, as *Section 6.1*. However, remember that raised machinery or equipment must also still be securely blocked in position.

Self-Contained Self-Rescuer Program

Many coal companies in the state have been contacted by MHST employees to participate in the SCSR research program. There will be 120 mines tested in the program.

In the program guidelines, mine management either chooses or asks five volunteers to participate. The miners are equipped with heart monitors that record the heart rate during the test. On the first day of the test, the five miners travel the intake escapeway at their mine with employees of MHST. This also counts as the ninety-day escapeway drill required by law. On the second day, one of the five miners that traveled the escapeway on day one travels the same route wearing a SCSR of the type used at the mine. The SCSR is provided by MHST at no cost to the company. The data collected on the monitors is transferred to computer disk and sent to the NIOSH Pittsburgh Research Center for analysis. The research center

uses a formula that calculates weight, age, heart rate, and physical ability to determine the amount of oxygen needed, and to determine the time the SCSR would function for the individual in the test. The MHST employee also records the mine height, distance, and the number of obstacles crossed. Identity of both the mine and the miner are kept confidential.

There are several advantages to the mine operators and the miners who participate in the program. The miner learns the limits of the apparatus. The program has shown that the breathing bag can collapse on all units if the miner is breathing heavily. Tests show that the miner should stop and take short breaths until the unit catches up. The miners are also taught the proper method of donning the unit. Program participants gain confidence that they can wear the units and get out of the mine if necessary. It is beneficial to all that field tests be conducted on the units especially when our lives are dependent upon them.



Suggestion Box

This is your Newsletter. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training
1615 Washington St. East
Charleston, WV 25311

Up Close and Personal

In September, Randy Smith of Region Four and Shannon, his wife, participated in the MS 150 Bike Tour, a two-day, 150 mile/150 kilometer bicycle tour from Lewisburg, WV to the Snowshoe Mountain Resort and back. One hundred and eighty-seven riders participated in the tour that raised a total of \$71,000 through sponsorships and contributions to benefit persons with Multiple

Sclerosis. The funds are used for educational workshops, special programs for the newly diagnosed, peer support counseling, equipment, independent living assistance, and medical research. The MS Society provides service to over 1,700 people in the WV Chapter. Special thanks to all the generous individuals in this agency whose donations will help make a wonderful difference in the lives of those afflicted with this disease.

Welcome ...

Region Four welcomes Randy D. Smith who recently transferred from the Buckhannon office to the Oak Hill office. Randy is an electrical inspector and has been employed with the agency since August 1989.

Did You Know?

The Kanawha County Circuit Court has had a great impact on the recent amendments to several administrative regulations including Series 15, (fans/ventilation), Series 20 (contractors), Series 23 (construction), and Series 42 (sealing mines). The West Virginia Coal Association and others challenged the amendments and won a ruling against our agency and the Board of Coal Mine Health and Safety. By now, each of you should have a copy of the order, Civil Action No. 95-Misc-565. Go through each regulation in your law book, crossing through those specific parts made null and void by the order. Each section and paragraph affected is listed at the bottom of the front page of the order. This will simplify each regulation by showing the changes and provide a useful tool for enforcement.

Congratulations to our newest facilitators: Chuck Webb, Allen VanHorne, Bill Tucker and Bennie Comer.

Happy Birthday to Bob Porter, hitting the big FIVE-O!

MINER DETAILS

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BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

From The Director's Office

Positive Attitudes or Negative Despair

Do we control our circumstances at work, or do we allow them to control us? Do we care which is which, or do we even think about it?

We cannot always control the circumstances in which we find ourselves. However, we will always have control of our attitudes or what we make of the bad circumstances we sometimes encounter.

It's so easy to blame something or someone for our bad circumstances, or to accept it as bad, and take on a despondent attitude.

If we wait for our circumstances to change before we can change, we will be controlled by our circumstances. However, if we take a positive approach in an attempt to become a positive influence, we may not change our circumstances, but we can control how we live within them.

Bad circumstances can become more endurable by recognizing that we may not be able to change them, but we can change how we react to them or live within them.

In a management class I attended a few years back, all of this was brought into focus for me very dramatically by using the Biblical story of Joseph. I am sure all of you remember that Joseph was a victim of attempted murder by his brothers, and then was sold as a slave to the Egyptians. Talk about bad circumstances!! Joseph had two choices. One, not to accept his circumstances and wallow in self pity; or two, become a positive influence within his circumstances.

He of course chose the latter and by maintaining an unshakable faith in God, he eventually ended up leading the entire nation of Egypt.

Don't be controlled by your unwanted circumstances. Allow prayer and a positive attitude to influence how you endure them.

Stephen F. Webber

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TQM Update

Through TQM, (Total Quality Management) our agency has become more streamlined and resourceful. The benefits of the TQM management style are apparent. At MHST this management process continues to be a success story. TQM is a long-term commitment to continuous improvement.

The Executive Team and the Design Team are integral parts of the TQM process. A total of six charter teams were formed last year:

- * Newsletter Team
- * Permit Extension Violation Team
- * Certification Card Revision Team
- * Electrical Policy for Battery Maintenance Team
- * Permitting Process Team
- * Pocket-Size Law Books Team

The Permitting Process Team was formed to review the coal mine permitting process, and if possible, streamline and standardize the process. They also hope to develop a policy manual, thus improving turn-around time of issuing permits.

Team members:

Shelia Propst - Team Leader
Sandy Bailey
Alice Palmer
Roger Powell
Gary Ball
Chuck Webb - Facilitator

The Pocket-Size Law Books Team was formed to design, develop, and prepare for publication, a quality, user-friendly, pocket-size law book. Any inspector in the field can attest to the need for such a publication.

Team members:

Doug Conaway - Team Leader
Steve Womack
Clark Gillian
Chuck Webb
Randall Bailey
John Meadows
Bill Tucker - Facilitator
Allen VanHorne - Facilitator

For Your Information

The *MINER DETAILS* newsletter is presently published on a bi-monthly basis. The newsletter staff will publish the newsletter on even-numbered months during the year of 1997, and on odd-numbered months in 1998, continuing this alternating pattern into the next millennium. This sequence allows the opportunity to address all holidays and special events in each month of the year, within a two-year time frame. This also provides for publication of the