

Serious Injury Accident: Contractor Seriously Burned

A contract equipment operator was seriously injured while performing maintenance on a Volvo EE460B excavator. The injured worker and a contract welder were attempting to remove a seized pin from the stick of the excavator by burning out the center of the pin with approximately 10-foot long burn bars. Throughout the process the burning bar would become unsecured in the holder and the assembly would separate. While the victim was holding/stabilizing the burning bar, the tip burned through the side of the pin into the grease reservoir located in the stick of the excavator causing grease to flashback into his face and setting his clothes on fire. The injured worker was hospitalized for 1st and 2nd degree burns to his face, neck and chest area, left hand and wrist, and legs, and possible respiratory burns. DMM's investigation determined that the injured worker had not been task trained to use a burning bar nor to perform the task that he was assisting with. The investigation also revealed that the injured worker and welder were not wearing fire resistant clothing, as required when working with molten metal.



The surge bin feeder structure where the accident occurred.



The pin shown from the side of the flash

RECOMMENDATIONS: All miners must be trained in State and company safety regulations and task trained prior to being assigned a task or duty (4 VAC 25-40-100). Training must include the use of proper personal protective equipment such as fire resistant clothing and face shields or goggles, which is required to be worn when working with molten metal (4 VAC 25-40-1750). Foremen and supervisors should provide clear, concise instructions when making task assignments and request feedback to ensure that the instructions are understood. The Division of Mineral Mining requires that defective equipment, such as the burning bar in this incident, must be taken out of service immediately and not used (4 VAC 25-40-360).