

## SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENT: May 2009 Contractor Employee Injured Crossing Silt Fence

A contractor employee with eleven years of mining experience was seriously injured when he attempted to step over a silt fence, caught his right foot in the fence, and fell forward. He landed on the side of his right foot dislocating and tearing the ligaments in his right ankle, and breaking both the tibia and fibula just above the ankle. The silt fence was located in a grassy yard area between an equipment parking area and newly established parking area for contractor employees. The contractor employees who parked in the new parking area had established a path through the yard from the parking area to the equipment lot that required them to step over the silt fence at a location in the fence where it had come loose from the support stakes and folded over (similar to that shown in the photograph below). An unobstructed gravel road located approximately 85 feet from the accident scene could have been utilized as a travelway instead of the “short-cut” across the yard and over the fence.

### CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

This serious personal injury occurred as a result of:

- Unsafe conditions allowed by the contractor. Over a four day period, a path was established by contractor personnel across an erected silt fence. The tripping hazard was not identified or corrected prior to miners being allowed to work in the area (4VAC25-40-1980).
- An unsafe act on the part of the injured miner. The miner used an unsafe travelway and took no precautions to prevent a fall as he crossed the silt fence.

To prevent a similar accident from occurring, DMM recommends:

- The accident and all factors that led up to it should be reviewed with all mine employees.
- Operators and contractor management should review related Division of Mineral Mining Safety Alerts and MSHA’s “SLAM” program with all employees. Employees should be trained in safe procedures for dealing with travelway obstructions including silt fence, process water lines, power cables, and others.
- Employees should be reminded of their responsibility to examine their work areas prior to starting work and frequently thereafter. Unsafe conditions should be corrected or reported to the certified foreman (4VAC25-40-460).



Section of silt fence similar to where the accident took place.