

DMM Safety Alert: Miners Working Alone

The Virginia Division of Mineral Mining (DMM) is highlighting a fatality that took place in the state of Montana due to its pertinence to the many small mine operators here in Virginia. The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) recently released the accident investigation of this fatality that took place on August 2, 2014.

A 53 year-old foreman with 25 years of mining experience was fatally injured at a sand and gravel processing site while working under the raised bed of a dump truck. The site employs two people operating a single shift, five days a week. One person habitually performs maintenance on weekends. On the day of the accident, a Saturday, the victim was working alone on the hydraulic lift system of a dump truck. He had placed a wooden block between the raised body and the frame rail in an attempt to hold the body in position. The miner was under the bed adding hydraulic oil to the system when the block failed allowing the bed to fall and pin him. The local coroner determined that the accident took place at approximately 11:00 AM on August 2nd, but the victim was not found until 10:00 AM on August 3rd.

To assist in avoiding this type of accident in Virginia, the Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

- Miners must not work alone in a hazardous area unless they can be seen or heard by another person in attendance.
- Repairs or maintenance must not be performed on mobile equipment until it is tagged out, the power off, and blocked against hazardous motion. Blocking materials must be of a type and capacity suitable for the job.
- Miners must receive task training in maintenance tasks that includes the recommendations of the equipment manufacturer.
- Mine operators should have written procedures regarding the lockout/tag out, de-energizing, and blocking of machinery and equipment.



Accident Scene