

Man killed in Colorado mine accident identified as tour guide

The tourist mine in Teller County experienced some type of mechanical incident with an elevator Thursday.

Oct. 12, 2024, 12:43 AM EDT / Updated Oct. 12, 2024, 1:05 AM EDT

By [Phil Hesel](#)

The man who died in [a Colorado mine elevator accident](#) was a 46-year-old father and tour guide there, officials said Friday as investigators try to understand what exactly occurred.

What Teller County Sheriff Jason Mikesell called a “very tragic accident” occurred as an elevator was about 500 feet down the 1,000-foot deep shaft at the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine near Cripple Creek at around noon Thursday.

The man killed was identified as Patrick Weier, who worked as a tour guide at the mine. Weier had a 7-year-old son and lived in Victor, a community of less than 400 in the area, officials said.

“Currently, we don’t know exactly what happened at 500 feet to cause this,” Mikesell said. “That’s something we’re working through.”

The elevator was on its descent when the accident occurred, he said.

The circumstances of Weier’s death were not disclosed, but Mikesell said investigators believe it was from the mechanical issue rather than a medical episode.

Some of the initial reports had the elevator experiencing a “drop,” but officials don’t know if it dropped or bounced, and there is no camera in the small elevator to show what happened, he said.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and other agencies are also investigating.

Mikesell said the state does safety inspections and an official from that agency was on scene after the accident Thursday.

“I know it has passed its safety inspections,” Mikesell said, but he did not have the dates during Friday’s news conference.

The elevator is operated from a cab on the surface, he said.

In addition to Weier, 23 other people were brought up from the mine after the accident.

Eleven, including Weier, were on the elevator at the time. A group of 12 tourists and a guide was at the 1,000-foot level and was brought up later in elevator trips of four, the sheriff’s office said.

The mine [said on its website](#) that it had “experienced a tragic event.”

“We would like to send our prayers and condolences to everyone involved,” it said. It also thanked first responders and other emergency personnel, and said the mine is closed until further notice.

Gov. Jared Polis [extended his condolences](#) Thursday, and he will call Weier’s family when it’s appropriate, Teller County Commissioner Dan Williams said.

The White House also reached out following the incident, Williams said.

“Somebody once wrote, and I’m not preaching, I’m just telling you, that there’s a time for everything under the sun, you’ve heard that,” Williams said. “This is a time for mourning, right now.”

12 rescued from underground mine in Colorado after fatality during tour

By Jesse Sarles, Libby Smith

Updated on: October 10, 2024 / 10:21 PM MDT / CBS Colorado

A rescue operation in Colorado on Thursday to bring trapped mining tour visitors out of an underground mine was successful, seven hours after one person died and four others were injured.

Gov. Jared Polis announced that the 12 people who were trapped in the Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine for 6 hours have been successfully rescued.

"I am relieved," Polis said in a prepared statement.

The popular tourist attraction where they used to mine for gold is located in Cripple Creek. Teller County Sheriff Jason Mikesell said in an afternoon news conference that the trolley car that goes down the elevator as part of the tour was 500 feet under the ground when a mechanical issue happened. That led to the injuries and the death. So far it's not clear exactly how the victim died.

Mikesell said the fatal victim and the four people injured were part of a group that was removed from the mine, but another group of 12 people 1,000 feet down wound up being unable to surface due to the safety issue.

After many hours, safety officials were able to get the elevator back in working order and the rescue of the 12 people was complete by 7:45 p.m. They were brought up four at a time and were given pizza to eat after their ordeal.

"We have people and engineers from the state of Colorado, from our local jurisdictions, mine safety, from our partnering mine right over here, our fire departments," Mikesell said while they were still working on the rescue. "We have the best people in the country that are here working on this issue right now, and my hope is that we can have it resolved tonight."

The identity of the person who was killed has not been released.

"Our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the individual lost in this incident," Polis said.

Colorado state Sen. Mark Baisley, a Republican who represents Teller County, called the situation tragic.

"The best outcome right now (is) a lot of families get together to recover from the fatality and to comfort each other," Baisley said.

Polis directed state resources to assist authorities with the rescue efforts.

About the gold mine tour

The Mollie Kathleen Gold Mine is located at 9388 Highway 67 in Cripple Creek, which is about an hour west of Colorado Springs. It advertises itself on its website as the "Only Vertical Shaft Gold Mine Tour." Visitors on the tour descend 1,000 feet underground.

Mikesell said the tourist attraction has operated for more than 50 years.

This season's last tours of the old gold mine were scheduled to be this weekend.