

Fayette County miner is killed

A Fayette County coal miner was killed in an accident yesterday while working in a mine near West Newton, Rostraver Township.

Anthony Crews, 26, of 131 Park Ave., Uniontown, worked as a shuttle car operator for Republic Steel Corp., West Newton RD 2, and was in the Banning No. 4 mine when his head was crushed between the shuttle car and timber.

Westmoreland County coroner's office said the accident happened at 3:15 p.m. and Crews was pronounced dead at 3:33 p.m. by Dr. King, mine physician. Manner of death by shock and severe blunt force injuries to the head was ruled accidental.

1981 Anthony Crews Banning mine fatality



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Wed, Dec 27,
2023

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

District 2

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
(UNDERGROUND COAL MINE)

FATAL POWERED HAULAGE ACCIDENT

Banning (ID No. 36 00973)
Republic Steel Corporation
West Newton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

March 5, 1981

by

Gerald F. Moody, Jr.
Coal Mine Inspector

Originating Office - Mine Safety and Health Administration
200 James Place, Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146
J. D. Breedon, Subdistrict Manager

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Authority —

This report is based on an investigation made pursuant to the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, Public Law 95-173, as amended by Public Law 95-164.

SECTION A — IDENTIFICATION DATA

1. Title of investigation: Fatal Powered Haulage Accident
 MSHA
 2. Date of investigation started: March 5, 1981
 3. Report release date: April 3, 1981
 4. Mine: Banning
 5. Mine ID number: 36 00973
 6. Company: Republic Steel Corporation
 7. Town, County, State: West Newton, Westmoreland Co., PA
 8. Author(s): Gerald F. Moody, Jr.

SECTION B — MINE INFORMATION

9. Daily production: 1,421 tons
 10. Surface employment: 64
 11. Underground employment: 282
 12. Name of coalbed: Pittsburgh
 13. Thickness of coalbed: 84 inches

SECTION C — LAST QUARTER INJURY FREQUENCY RATE (HSAC) FOR

14. Industry: 10.31
 15. This operation: 23.41
 16. Training program approved: Yes
 17. Mine Profile Rating: 821

SECTION D — ORIGINATING OFFICE

18 Mine Safety and Health Administration
 Coal Mine Health and Safety District No.: 2
 Address: 200 James Place, Monroeville, PA 15146

SECTION E — ABSTRACT

On Thursday, March 5, 1981, at approximately 3:15 p.m., a powered haulage accident occurred at the 6 north (009) section loading ramp of Republic Steel Corporation's Banning mine, resulting in Anthony W. Crews, general laborer/shuttle-car operator being fatally injured. Crews, age 26, had a total of 10 months 26 days mining experience with 92 shifts as a shuttle-car operator. Crews, while standing in the shuttle-car compartment with his head outside the canopy, was in the process of positioning mine cars beneath the shuttle-car discharge boom when the boom caught on a mine car and pushed the shuttle car sideways. The accident occurred when the trip of mine cars continued to move while the shuttle-car discharge boom was caught against the mine car, resulting in the victim being fatally injured.

SECTION F — MINE ORGANIZATION

Company officials:	Name	Address
19. Chairman	W. J. DeLancey,	Republic Building, Box 6778, Cleveland, OH 44101
Director, Coal		
20. Mining Division	R. H. Foley,	455 Race Track Road, P.O. Box 500, Meadow Lands, PA 15347
Safety		
21. Supervisor	W. H. Stimmel,	455 Race Track Road, P.O. Box 500, Meadow Lands, PA 15347
Mine Supt./		
22. Principle officer—H&S:	Frank Masney,	R.D. #2, Box 56, West Newton, PA 15089
23. Labor Organization:	United Mine Workers of America	
Chairman—H&S Committee:	Robert Preston,	Box 246, Grindstone, PA 15442

Commentary

On Thursday, March 5, 1981, at approximately 8:10 a.m., the 6 north (009) section crew under the supervision of Stanley Andler, Section Foreman, entered the mine and traveled to the working section. Andler examined the proposed work areas and assigned duties and work locations to the crew members.

Coal production commenced and continued normally until shortly after 3 p.m., when the fifth loaded trip was removed from the section loading ramp. Tim Janitor, general laborer/roof-bolter operator, used a 13-ton locomotive to push another 10 mine-car trip onto the loading ramp. Skids were placed under a wheel on each of the front three mine cars in the trip and Crews positioned the car spotter catches. He then drove his standard side shuttle car (see sketch) onto the loading ramp and began discharging coal into the first mine car. Andler was attempting to disconnect Janitor's locomotive from the mine car when he heard Crews yell, "I can't stop it." Andler turned and observed Crews standing in the shuttle-car compartment with his head crushed between the shuttle-car canopy and a post installed at the loading ramp. Andler sent Janitor for the other crew members and notified mine officials of the accident.

When the other crew members arrived, Randy Bombach, continuous-miner operator/emergency medical technician, determined that Crews had no pulse and moved the shuttle car several inches releasing Crews. Crews was placed on a stretcher and transported to the surface where he was pronounced dead by Doctor A. King at 3:33 p.m.

Discussion and Evaluation

The investigation revealed the following factors relevant to the occurrence of the accident:

1. The National Mine Service Company TorKar shuttle car, Model No. 48-S1-48, Serial No. 1230, 550-volt direct current involved in the accident, was equipped with a 4-post canopy, No. 64051832, which was set about 18 inches above the TorKar frame (54 inches above the floor of the operator's compartment). The American Car and Foundry drop-bottom type mine car involved in the accident was approximately 17.5 feet in length (coupler to coupler), 6.3 feet in width, and 4 feet in height (from the mine rail) with a raw material capacity of 8 tons. The Stamler car spotter, Model No. 6SH-20-18, Serial No. 1392, 550-volt direct current was equipped with offsetting catches (dogs) which would push against the lower part of the mine cars to move the cars forward. One electrical pull-type switch was provided on each side of the loading ramp for the shuttle-car operators to use when moving mine cars forward.

2. The height at the loading ramp area of 6 north section varied from 6.9 feet (normal mining height) to 11.4 feet over the mine track. The ramp was 12 feet in width and 1.3 feet above the track entry floor. The distance between the posts on which the car spotter switches were located was 15.5 feet and the shuttle car was 9 feet in width. (See sketch). The mine tracks were 60-pound rails spiked to wooden ties and supported with ballast. The mine floor and ribs were dry and clear of obstructions.

3. The crew, supervised by Andler, consisted of general laborers who would regularly replace any production crew while they were in training (annual training, etc.). Andler's crew had last replaced the regular production crew in 6 north section (accident area) on February 19, 1981.

4. On March 5, 1981, at about 3:10 p.m., 5 loaded mine car trips had been removed from the ramp and the sixth trip was placed on the ramp. Janitor stated that after he pushed the sixth trip onto the ramp, skids were placed under the first 3 mine cars. Crews released the car spotter catches and used the pull-type car spotter switch on the off-standard side of the ramp to position the catches against the mine car. Crews drove his standard side shuttle car onto the ramp and loaded about 2/3 of the first mine car. Meanwhile, Janitor was sitting at the locomotive's operating controls with the brake engaged. Andler, who was standing near the inby end of the locomotive with his back to Crews, lifted the lever to uncouple the locomotive and told Janitor to pull away. Janitor moved the controller to the first point and the locomotive jerked because it was not uncoupled. As Janitor reversed the directional controller, he saw Crews in a standing position with his head outside the canopy and one hand on the car spotter switch. The car spotter was operating and the mine cars were pushing against the locomotive.

5. Andler stated that while Crews was discharging coal into the first mine car, he was standing near the inby end of the locomotive facing Janitor and telling him what the next move would be. Andler heard Crews yell, "I can't stop it," turned and saw Crews in a standing position with his body, from the neck down, under the canopy. His head was caught between the canopy and a post installed at the ramp. The cars continued to move forward and then stopped.

6. During the investigation, on March 5, 1981, it was observed that the front end of the moving second mine car had caught the shuttle-car discharge boom causing the front wheels of the shuttle car to slide sideways about 12 inches catching Crews between the canopy and a post. Andler stated that Crews had pulled the shuttle car straight onto the ramp to load the first mine car. Measurements of the approximate position of the shuttle car and discussions with other shuttle-car operators indicated that prior to the accident normally there would be approximately 24 inches between the shuttle car and the post at the loading ramp. Measurements indicated that the bottom of the post had been moved sideways about 19 inches.

7. The shuttle-car boom was raised to its maximum height while positioned at the loading ramp and a clearance of 3 inches was measured between the top of the second mine car and the bottom of the shuttle-car boom. The shuttle-car boom remained in the raised position and after 10 minutes the boom had not bled off. A dent-type mark was observed 2-1/2 inches below the top of the second mine car (front end) and a difference of 2-1/2 inches in height was measured between the top of the first mine car (back end) and the top of the second mine car (front end). The car spotter was examined and then used to position 2 mine cars at the loading ramp. No deficiencies were observed. Andler stated that he had no knowledge as to why the car spotter stopped after the accident.

8. Janitor stated that during the first part of the shift he saw Crews' shuttle-car boom catch on top of a mine car and move slightly as the mine car was moved ahead. Tom Encrapera, off-standard shuttle-car operator, stated that 2 weeks prior to the accident he had a problem of clearing the mine cars with his shuttle-car boom. He reported it to Andler and they (he and Andler) put headerboards down on the ramp to achieve additional clearance. Encrapera also stated that on the morning of the accident, he bumped the mine cars with his boom and reported it to Andler who was standing at the ramp area. Andler instructed him to raise his boom higher. Later in the day, Encrapera and Crews talked in the dinner hole about the cars scraping the shuttle-car boom. Andler was questioned as to his knowledge about mine cars scraping the shuttle-car booms and he stated that he had no knowledge of it occurring on the day of the accident.

9. Interviews with the 6 shuttle-car operators normally assigned to 6 north section revealed that on Monday, March 2, 1981, the operator of the off-standard shuttle car experienced a problem of clearing the top of the mine cars with the shuttle-car boom. After approximately 4 inches of wooden headerboards were nailed to the wooden ramp on the off-standard side, the shuttle-car boom would clear the top of the mine cars. During the investigation, only one headerboard (2-inch by 10-inch by 18-inch) was observed nailed onto the loading ramp. (See sketch).

10. Prior to the mine resuming operations MSHA personnel examined the shuttle car, locomotive and car spotter and no deficiencies were observed except that while positioning empty mine cars on the loading ramp for additional measurements, on 3 consecutive times the car spotter continued to push the mine cars for 4 to 7 seconds (2 to 4 feet) after the car spotter switch was released. The car spotter would then stop pushing on its own. An examination of the car spotter electrical circuit revealed that the two remote switches and the control switch on the car spotter (see wiring diagram) to cut off power to the main contactor operating coil were operating properly and the contactors were staying (hanging up) in the closed position allowing the car spotter to continue operating until such time as the contactor disengaged. The contactor tips were removed and although some burning or pitting was observed on the tips, they appeared to be comparatively new. New contactor tips were installed and the car spotter was operated at least 12 times and no further sticking occurred.

11. Interviews with Andler's crew revealed that they were not aware of any problems with the car spotter continuing to operate after the spotter switch was released. Interviews with the shuttle-car operators normally assigned to 6 north section revealed that on 2 occasions (one or two months prior to the accident) the car spotter had continued to operate after the spotter switch was released. Both incidents were reported and corrected promptly.

12. The measurements of the empty mine cars at the loading ramp indicated a variance of up to 2-1/4 inches in height. These same mine cars were then measured at a specific location one block outby the loading ramp and varied in height up to 1-1/8 inch. Measurements made of other empty mine cars at different locations indicated similar variances in the height of mine cars were not uncommon.

13. Interviews with the 6 shuttle-car operators assigned to 6 north section revealed that 4 operators normally stood outside the shuttle-car compartment with one foot on the ramp, one foot on the pump motor switch inside the compartment and one hand on the car spotter switch while discharging coal into the mine cars. The other 2 operators stated that they sat in the operator's compartment while discharging coal into the mine cars and operating the car spotter switches. Andler stated that Crews normally sat while operating the shuttle car; however, when loading the back end of the mine cars, Crews would stick his head out to make sure he didn't spill coal between the mine cars.

Findings of Fact

1. When the accident occurred at the 6 north loading ramp, the shuttle-car operator (victim) was standing inside the operator's compartment with his head outside the area of protection provided by the shuttle-car canopy. A violation of Section 75.1710-1(a).

2. The mine cars involved in the accident when positioned at the 6 north loading ramp varied in height up to 2-1/2 inches. A minimum clearance of 6 inches shall be provided between the top of all mine cars and the underside of the shuttle-car discharge boom while the shuttle-car boom is positioned over the mine car. A Notice to Provide Safeguard Section 75.1403.

3. On at least 3 occasions, the mine car spotter continued to move the mine cars after the pull-type car spotter switch had been released. Two separate means of deenergizing or deactivating the mine car spotter, one of which will deenergize the main power circuit leading to the car spotter shall be provided on each side of the loading ramp. A Notice to Provide Safeguard Section 75.1403.

Conclusion

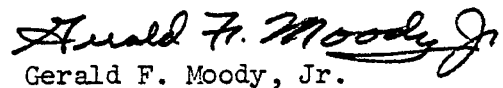
The accident occurred when the trip of mine cars continued to move while the shuttle-car discharge boom was caught against the mine car, resulting in the victim being fatally injured.

A factor contributing to the seriousness of the accident was management's failure to require operators of equipment provided with canopies to stay within the area of protection provided by the canopy when they are operating the equipment.

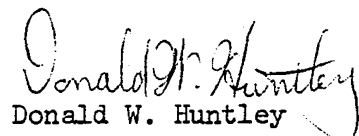
Approved by:



J. D. Breedon
Subdistrict Manager--Coal Mine
Safety and Health District 2



Gerald F. Moody, Jr.



Donald W. Huntley
District Manager--Coal Mine
Safety and Health District 2

APPENDIX

List of persons furnishing information and/or present during the investigation:

Republic Steel Corporation Officials

Gerald P. McBride	Assistant Director, Coal Mine Division
Mark A. Craig	General Superintendent, Coal Mine Division
Frank Masney	Superintendent
James G. Price	Mine Foreman
J. J. Gresh	General Assistant Mine Foreman
Stanley Andler	Assistant Mine Foreman (Eyewitness)
Andrew Grushecky	General Maintenance Foreman
Frank Masney, Jr.	Field Engineer
Glen Myers	Engineer
John Bitting	Engineer
John B. Anderson	Assistant Director of Safety
William H. Walker	Superintendent of Safety
Bud Rosewell	Division of Safety Coordinator
William H. Stimmel	Safety Supervisor
James J. Kashery	Assistant Safety Supervisor
Mary E. Sherbondy	Safety Department - Paramedic
Bron Taoras	Lawyer
Bill Mathers	Assistant Mine Foreman

Republic Steel Corporation Employees

Tim Janitor	General Laborer/Roof-Bolter Operator (Eyewitness)
Randy Bombach	Continuous-Miner Operator
Tom Encrapera	General Laborer/Shuttle-Car Operator
Richard W. Naylor	General Laborer/Loading-Machine Operator
Robert W. Pieczarka	General Laborer/Roof-Bolter Operator
James E. Orndoff	Loading-Machine Operator
George Bell	Shuttle-Car Operator
Keith Adams	Shuttle-Car Operator
Tom Wilson	Shuttle-Car Operator
Greg Gondura	Shuttle-Car Operator
Chris Kardos	Shuttle-Car Operator
John Leshko III	Shuttle-Car Operator

Representatives of Miners

Marty Connors	Safety Advisor, U.M.W.A.
Miller Savage	Safety Inspector, U.M.W.A.
Mike Tehi	Safety Inspector, U.M.W.A.
Gerald Abbott	President, Local Union No. 9873, U.M.W.A.
Alex Konich	Chairman, Mine Committee, Local Union No. 9873, U.M.W.A.

Gary Garbutt	Member, Mine Committee, Local Union No. 9873, U.M.W.A.
Robert Preston	Chairman, Health and Safety Committee, Local Union No. 9873, U.M.W.A.
Edward R. Hawse, Sr.	Member, Health and Safety Committee, Local Union No. 9873, U.M.W.A.

Woodward Associates, Inc.

William N. Patterson	General Manager
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Westmoreland County Coroner's Office

Gerald W. Fritz	Deputy Coroner
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Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources

Felice Libertini	Deep Mine Inspector
John Funka	Electrical Inspector

United States Bureau of Mines

James M. Peay	Engineering Psychologist
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Mine Safety and Health Administration

James L. Potiseck	Coal Mine Inspector (Electrical)
Robert E. Swarrow	Coal Mine Inspector
Timothy J. Thompson	Mining Engineer
Gerald F. Moody, Jr.	Coal Mine Inspector



SECTION A—VICTIM DATA

1. Name: Anthony W. Crews 2. Sex M F 3. SSN: [REDACTED]
4. Age: 26 5. Job classification: inside General Laborer
6. Experience at this classification: 10 months 26 days 7. Total mining experience: 10 months 26 days
8. What activity was being performed at time of accident? Advancing mine cars for the purpose of discharging coal from shuttle car into mine car.
9. Victim's experience at this activity: 92 shifts operating shuttle car.
10. Was victim trained in this task? Yes
11. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) _____ Date received
New miner training 4/11/80

SECTION B—SUPERVISOR DATA (supervisor of victim)

12. Name: Stanley Andler 13. Certified: Yes No
14. Experience as supervisor: 18½ years 15. Total mining experience: 35¼ years
16. Health and Safety courses/Training received (related to accident) _____ Date received
Annual refresher 11/28/80
17. When was the supervisor last present at accident scene prior to the accident? Present at time of accident.
18. What did he do when he was there? Disconnecting locomotive from mine car.
19. When was he last in contact with the victim? Immediately prior and during accident.
20. Did he issue instructions relative to the accident? Throughout the shift cautioned victim on hauling and dumping coal, and trip placement.
21. Was he aware of or did he express an awareness of any unsafe practice or condition? No



SECTION A—INFORMATION REQUIRED IN ELECTRICAL ACCIDENT REPORTS

1. Voltage of circuit involved: _____

2. Voltage to which victim was exposed: _____

3. Type of supply circuitry (trolley wire, portable rectifier, wye connected secondary, delta connected secondary) _____

4. Type, size, and insulation rating of conductor involved: _____

5. Electrical protection for circuit: _____

6. Ground fault trip value (3 phase only): _____

7. Wiring diagram of circuit involved (attach separate drawing): _____

8. Condition of mine floor: _____

9. Was victim wearing rubber boots? Yes No Condition of boots: _____

10. Was victim wearing gloves? Yes No Type: _____ Condition: _____

11. Type of frame grounding for equipment: _____

SECTION B—INFORMATION REQUIRED IN ACCIDENTS INVOLVING EQUIPMENT

12. Name of manufacturer of machine involved: National Mine Service Company

13. Model, approval number, and type of machine: 48-S1-48, Approval No.-2F-1132A-20, Serial No. 1230, Canopy No. 64051832

14. Machine voltage: 550 volts direct current

15. Did design of machine contribute to accident? Yes No

16. Did maintenance deficiencies contribute to accident? Yes No

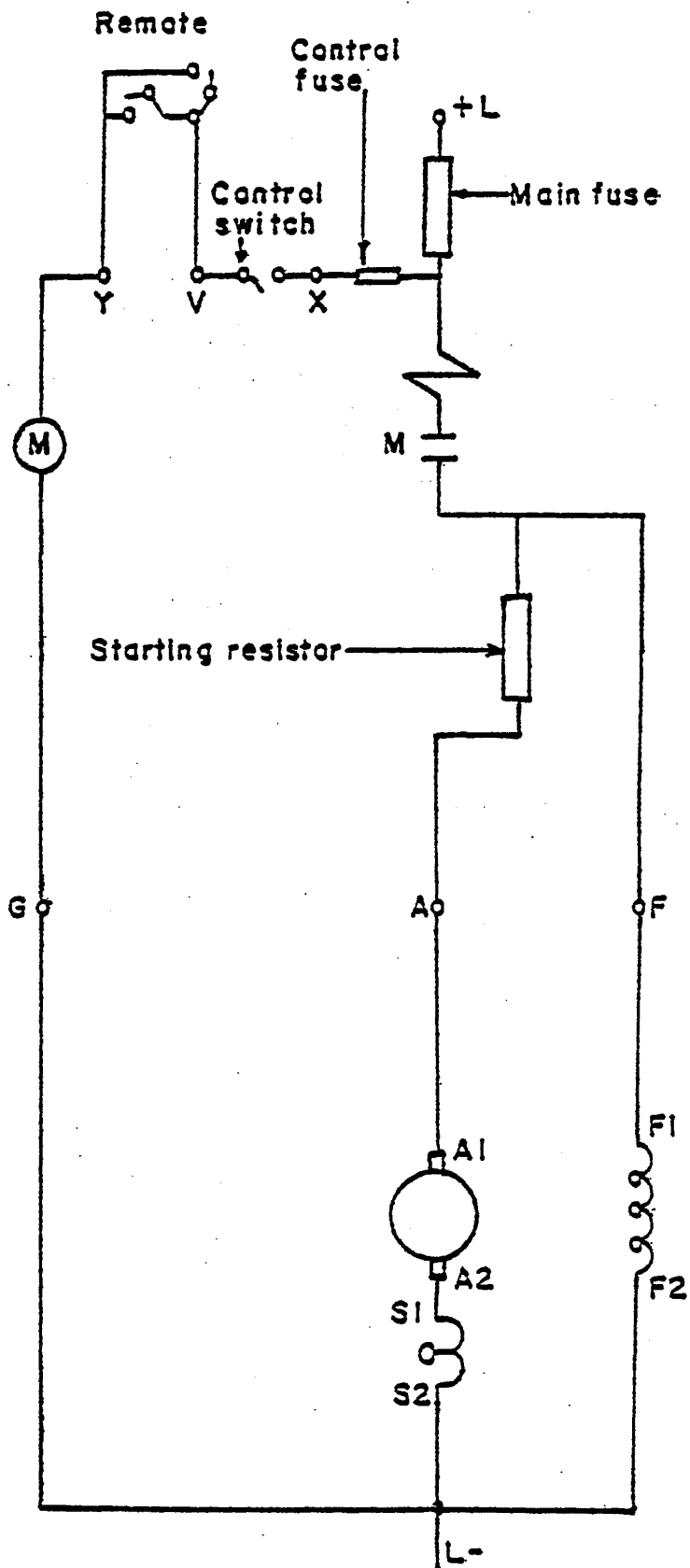
17. Name of official responsible for maintenance of equipment: Andrew Gruckecky

18. Experience of operator: 92 shifts

19. Was machine being operated within safe limits of its capability? Yes No

SECTION C—REMARKS

Stamler car spotter, Model No. 6SH-20-18, Serial No. 1392, 550 volts direct current. Diagram of wiring circuit attached.



Wiring diagram of C-3 type AF motor starter for car spotter

FATAL POWERED HAULAGE ACCIDENT
 Banning (ID No. 36 00973)
 Republic Steel Corporation
 West Newton, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

March 5, 1981

Section I (Coal Only)

MSHA and/or State Certification and/or Qualification

Mine ID 36 00973

Date Training Plan Approved April 27, 1979 Date Training Received _____ Date Training Received _____

- * Certified Person (Underground) _____
 - * Certified Person (Surface) _____
 - * Methane & Oxygen Deficiency Testing _____
 - * Electrical _____
 - * Energized Surface High Voltage _____
 - * Annual Retraining Required _____
- Dust (Sampling) _____
 - Dust (Calibration) _____
 - Noise _____
 - * Impoundments _____
 - * Hoisting Engineer _____

Section II (Metal-Non-metal and Coal)

MSHA Training Programs Completed

Date of Hire April 7, 1980 Date Training Plan Approved April 27, 1979

Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Required Training (Victim)	Date Training Received
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Miner (U.B.)	<u>4/11/80</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (U.G.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Miner (Sur.)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Training (Sur.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (U.G.)	_____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Newly Employed Experienced (Sur.)	_____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (U.G.)	_____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Refresher (Sur.)	_____		

Task Training Specify Type:
 Operating shuttle car 6/21-8/29/80

Section III

Company Training Program Completed:

Training	OJT/Formal	Instructor	Date Completed
<u>Operating shuttle car</u>	<u>on the job</u>	<u>Tom Wilson</u>	<u>8/29/80</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Section IV

DID VICTIM HAVE TRAINING SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THE TASK BEING PERFORMED
AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT?

YES NO WHEN? 6/21-8/29/80

BY WHOM? Tom Wilson HOW WAS TRAINING GIVEN? On the job

Section V

RECOMMEND TRAINING PLAN EVALUATION BY EDUCATION & TRAINING OFFICE

YES NO

Training plan currently being evaluated.
