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SAFETY ALERT BULLETIN No. 1 – 2026

Kentucky Division of Mine Safety SAB No. 1 – Fall of Highwall

Two (2) non-injury highwall failures have occurred at underground mines in the Harlan branch in two days.

On February 17th, a section of the highwall fell in the #4 entry behind the fan housing. The fall was approximately 5-feet high, 16-feet in width by 4-feet thick, pulling the first row of full grouted roof bolts, which caused the ventilation fan to short-circuit the air flow.

On February 19th, a large section of the highwall fell between the No. 3 and No. 4 Portal entries. The fall was approximately 20-feet high, 15-feet in width, and 7-feet thick.

Incident Scene



Recommendations

1. Conduct regular and thorough visual examinations of highwalls for cracks and signs of instability.
2. All employees shall be trained in identifying signs of highwall instability.
3. Perform an adequate number of examinations during fluctuating winter weather, particularly during freezing and thawing conditions and periods of excessive rain.