

FATALGRAM 10-02

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: June 21, 2010

Industry: Mining (Exploratory mineral drilling)

Location: Livengood, Alaska, in the hills east of mile marker 74 of the Elliot Highway.
Coordinates 65 30 20.037N – 148 30 55.2132W.

Summary: An employee was fatally injured by mechanical asphyxiation when he became entangled in a 10' x 4" section of rotating drill pipe.

Description of incident: The victim was a driller's helper who had been on the job since June 4, 2010. The driller's helper was holding a 10-foot section of drill pipe that was turning at 11-12 RPMs and was attached to the drill rig's rotating drill head. The driller then held up a second section of pipe and was attempting to line up the drill pipe threads when he heard the driller's helper yell as the helper's jacket became entangled in the rotating pipe. The driller dropped his section of pipe and ran approximately 20 feet to the drill rig controls to stop the drill head rotation. The driller then returned to the helper and loosened the helper's clothing. The driller then radioed for assistance.

Other employees with varying levels of first aid training arrived on the scene within minutes. The victim was unresponsive, had a weak pulse and difficulty breathing. The victim was rolled onto a makeshift stretcher and placed into the back of a pickup truck. The victim was then transported to the North Country Mercantile approximately 15 minutes away at mile 66 of the Elliot Highway. During this time a pulse could no longer be detected and CPR was initiated.

At the North County Mercantile the responding employees were met by a response vehicle from the Livengood camp and other subcontractor employees. An employee of a subcontractor attached an automated external defibrillator (AED) to the victim. The AED advised not to administer shock, but to continue CPR which the employees did. The employees then transported the victim to the Fairbanks North Star Borough boundary at approximately 32 mile of the Elliott Hwy. There they were met by Steese Volunteer Fire and Rescue personnel who pronounced the employee dead, and transported the body to the Fox weight scales for further transport to Fairbanks by funeral home personnel.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Ensure a proper written hazard assessment is conducted on drill rigs and drilling operations.

(continued)

- Ensure workers are trained in the hazards associated with drilling and drill rig operations.
- Ensure a written Standard Operating Procedure for making drill pipe connections is in place.
- Review company emergency response plans and make sure all elements are in place.