



Lead Lines



Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter
International Society of Explosives Engineers
www.easternpaisee.com

Volume 21 Number 3

Summer 2014

The Eastern PA ISEE welcomes requests for topics, and invites readers' letters and other contributions that relate to drilling, blasting, seismology and explosives engineering.

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Annual Baseball Game Meeting

Wednesday August 27, 2014

Coca-Cola Park
1050 Iron Pigs Way
Allentown, PA 18109

PPL Picnic Patio

5:45 PM -- Gates Open

7:05 PM -- Game Time

Dinner Buffet Provided

If you are planning to attend or have any questions, please contact Dan Leach at Dan.Leach@am.dynonobel.com or 717.574.4024.

**\$30.00 per person is payable that evening to Nate Schultz
Please make checks payable to: Eastern PA Chapter ISEE**

FROM PHILADELPHIA AND POINTS SOUTH: Take I-476 N to Exit 56 Lehigh Valley. Take U.S. 22 E to Exit for Airport Road South. Keep Right on the exit ramp and merge onto Airport Road heading south. Make a Right on American Parkway (at intersection with light). Make a Left into Coca-Cola Park complex.

FROM NEW YORK CITY AND POINTS NORTH: Take US-19 S/US-1 & 9 S. Take I-78 W. Merge onto PA-33 N via Exit 71 toward US-22 Stroudsburg. Take U.S. 22 W to Exit for Airport Road South. Merge Right off exit ramp onto Airport Road South. Make a Right on American Parkway (at intersection with light). Make a Left into Coca-Cola Park complex.

FROM READING AND POINTS WEST: Take US-222 N toward Allentown. Take PA-100 ramp toward Fogelsville/Trexlerstown. Turn Left onto PA-100 N. Merge onto I-78 E / US-22 E toward Allentown. Keep Right to take US-22 E Exit 51. Take U.S. 22 E to Exit for Airport Road South. Keep Right on the exit ramp and merge onto Airport Road heading south. Make a Right on American Parkway (at intersection with light). Make a Left into Coca-Cola Park complex.

FROM PHILLIPSBURG AND POINTS EAST: Take US-22 W (Portions toll) (Crossing into Pennsylvania) to Exit for Airport Road South. Merge Right off exit ramp onto Airport Road South. Make a Right on American Parkway (at intersection with light). Make a Left into Coca-Cola Park complex.



Letter from The President

Dear Chapter,

I would like to thank everyone who submitted their comments on the PA Blaster's License Suspension and Revocation Procedures proposed by DEP. Our chapter was well represented at meetings with DEP and on several industry conference calls to discuss the Technical Guidance Document. DEP has been very receptive to industry comments and suggestions for revisions. DEP agrees that the subjectivity of the Blaster's Matrix does not work and other procedures for evaluation need to be developed. DEP is also working on revisions to the Blasting Activity Permits and Chapter 211, rough drafts maybe available for industry review as early as this summer. We will forward these drafts for your review, as they are made available.



Our general membership meeting held at the Hollywood Casino in Grantville, PA, was a great success. The meeting venue was spacious and the Epic buffet provided a great meal. Thank you to Dan Leach for seeking out this opportunity for the chapter. We will be attending the Iron Pigs game again this August in lieu of a general membership meeting, and plan to return to the Hollywood Casino in November. We look forward to seeing many new and old faces at these upcoming events.

Stay Safe,

Scott



Safety Shortcuts -- The Longest Distance Between Two Points

By Steven D. Sandbrook, CMSP, President – Eagle Mine Safety

A man by the name of Louis Binstock once said, “Too often the shortcut, the line of least resistance, is responsible for evanescent and unsatisfactory success.”

Simply put, taking shortcuts only results in success for a short duration of time. We’re all guilty of taking shortcuts now and again, whether it’s not signalling to change lanes, skipping a step on the stairs or using a chair instead of a ladder to reach something on the top shelf. But in the safety profession, each time you take a shortcut you also risk cutting your career short by suffering a significant injury – or even death.

Breaking Bad Habits

Most of us develop bad habits of taking the occasional shortcut while working. If this is true for you, break the habit now. Your safety and well-being are far more important to your manager, co-workers and customers — not to mention your family — than getting the job done quickly.

While your boss may admire and appreciate your conscientious effort to finish the job on time, you won’t be admired if your hasty shortcut results in an injury. If a rushed job results in an accident, not only could it have an effect on your personal, financial and social life, it also may result in the job taking longer or even coming to a complete stop.

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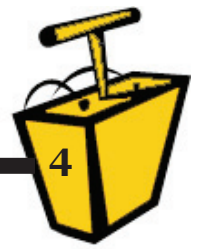
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How many times have you heard of employees incurring back injuries because it was “faster” to lift the load by themselves instead of asking for help or using a mechanical aid? Or someone falls because he stepped onto the top of the ladder instead of locating another ladder long enough for the job? We must eliminate this intrinsic need to take shortcuts, but how? Well, we need to allow ourselves enough time to do the job at a safe pace, especially when starting a new job or working in an unfamiliar environment.

Just because you’ve done something a “thousand times” doesn’t mean you’re impervious to an accident or injury, so don’t improvise to save time.

Continued on page 7



Redesigned World of Explosives Website to Help Educate Homeowners

By Bill Wahl, Marketing Manager - International Society of Explosives Engineers

There's a newly redesigned website out there to help educate homeowners and community members about all the science, planning and safety that goes into each and every single blast. It's called The World of Explosives, and it was developed by the International Society of Explosives Engineers Public Education/Public Relations Committee.

Written by professionals in the explosives industry, each section of the website tackles the most commonly asked about topics of a blasting job. The section on safety covers all the safety precautions that go into every single blast.

The blasting basics section touches on the intricate planning of a blast from document review, to site examination and everything in between leading up to the blast implementation.

There are also sections covering vibration basics, blast monitoring, regulatory agencies and a list of the most commonly asked questions from homeowners along with their corresponding answers in the FAQs section. The site is rounded off with a videos tab featuring Understanding Vibrations from Blasting, a 20 minute video covering the effects of blasting and environmental forces on homes and structures, and Explosives: The Power Tool, a popular video created by IME.

Head over to www.explosives.org and check out the site. And next time you're greeted by a concerned homeowner, you can recommend the World of Explosives in addition to the communication pieces already in place to help educate people living near a blast site.

THE WORLD OF EXPLOSIVES

SAFETY • BLASTING BASICS • VIBRATION BASICS • BLAST MONITORING • FAQ • REGULATING AGENCIES • VIDEOS



71%
of all explosives in the
United States are used
for coal mining.

Millions of tons of explosives are used each year to get minerals and metals out of the ground that we all use in our daily lives. These are minerals that make our food tastier, precious metals that our computers and cell phones need to function properly and materials used to build buildings and pave our roads.

Explosives engineers, the people who work with these explosives, are skilled, highly trained workers who take every precaution to ensure the safety of those in a blasting area and the surrounding communities.

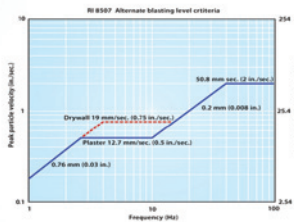
If you live in a community where blasting is occurring, the World of Explosives will help walk you through the procedures and protocols blasters follow before a shot takes place.

Visit the International Society of Explosives Engineers for more information.
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LIMITS



Ground vibration limits are typically set to prevent property damage. There is no one limit in use everywhere. Limits are often rooted in research conducted over decades. By design, they are typically over-engineered to provide a safety factor.

In some cases, limits may be expressed as a single value, for example 25 mm/sec (1.0 in/sec.) However, it is more likely that the limits will vary based on frequency. One very common set of recommended limits is derived from research conducted by the United States Bureau of Mines (USBM). The USBM closed in the 1980s due to budget cuts; however, the work it did in the five previous decades greatly increased our understanding of how blast vibrations affect structures.

One such research resulted in a report entitled USBM RI 8507, "Structure Response and Damage Produced by Ground Vibration from Surface Mine Blasting." It was from this report that the USBM recommended the frequency-based limiting criteria. Current research continues to support these findings.

The basis for the frequency-based limits is the concept of structure response. The recommended limits in RI 8507 are for the prevention of threshold cosmetic damage in the most susceptible of materials such as plaster and sheetrock. Other materials including masonry, concrete block and mass concrete can withstand much higher levels of vibration without damage.

Visit the International Society of Explosives Engineers for more information.
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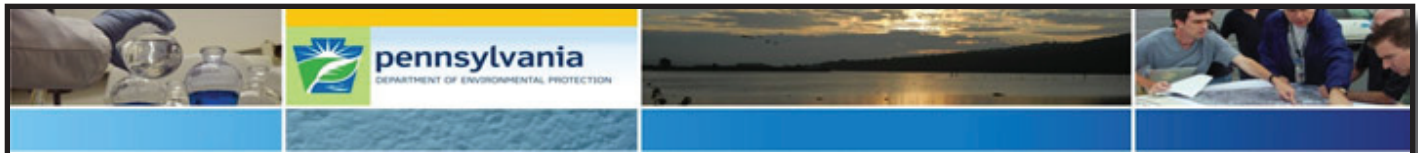
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Letter from The Chief

Dear Eastern PA ISEE Newsletter readers,

Blasting is widely categorized as an ultra-hazardous activity. By engaging in an ultra-hazardous activity, a blaster-in-charge assumes responsibility for the outcome of the blast that blaster-in-charge designs, oversees the loading of, and detonates. The blaster-in-charge is a practitioner of the art of blasting, has been certified by the State as qualified to hold a Blaster's License, which includes the requirement that he or she had sufficient experience as a blaster's learner before obtaining a Blaster's License, and after obtaining a Blaster's License, receives continuing education. As regulators, we expect that blasters-in-charge will carefully weigh the risks associated with blast designs that are applied to various operations where blasting is conducted in varying geological conditions across the State and choose wisely how to load and detonate a blast according to a chosen design, choose to take added precautions when executing the blast design, or decide that due to the geologic conditions, environmental or cultural conditions, not blast at all. Blasting operations are conducted all across Pennsylvania on a daily basis in a safe manner. However, unfortunately, incidents occur where the lives of people who live near, pass by, or work at the site of the blasting operation or property near the blasting operations are put in danger by blasts in which the risks were not sufficiently weighed or properly addressed. As a licensed professional, all blaster's-in-charge must carefully weigh the risks of any blasts they design, oversee the loading of, and detonate to ensure that those blasts are among the vast majority of blasts detonated each day in Pennsylvania that are done safely, without incident. If you do so, we will both be happier and better enjoy this summer.

Thanks for your consideration in this matter and have a good, safe remainder of the summer!

Rick

Lead Lines



Safety Shortcuts Continued

Going through a daily checklist and having all the proper tools and safety equipment on hand in advance are just a few ways to save time. It is your responsibility to avoid any potentially dangerous or unsafe job practices.

Take the time to lock out/tag out equipment, use fall protection, follow safe ladder procedures and use PPE and the proper tools for the job. This requires planning ahead. We all like to get our work done without unnecessary effort, getting the most out of the time and energy we spend on each task and sometimes this attitude helps us find a better way of getting things done. But at other times, when it leads us to take shortcuts, it can put us on a direct route to trouble.

All of us at some time or another have exposed ourselves to possible harm by shortcutting rather than taking the few extra steps required by the safe way. As kids, we hopped the fence instead of using the gate; now we cross the street between the intersections. A successful shortcut—meaning one that results in no damage—nevertheless has a downside. It gives us the feeling that we can always substitute the quick way for the tried-and-true safe way and get out of it in one piece. Unfortunately, that feeling can be misleading.

Take the case of the worker on a ladder who is almost finished with the job except for just a little bit that can be done by reaching farther than the safety guidelines call for. Its decision time: get down, move the ladder, and climb up again, or take a chance. What are the possible outcomes? The worker may luck out and finish the job by reaching, with no trouble. Or leaning too far to the side may cause the ladder to topple and the worker to fall, resulting in a concussion, a broken leg, or a broken neck. What kind of choice was that?

One way, the safe way, the odds are 100 to 1 in your favour. There's no way of knowing the exact odds on a given shortcut—but it's surely less than 100 to 1. So the decision to take a chance was not a wise one. Risking your neck to save a few minutes of time is a bad gamble. If you are told to go to a particular work area, your employer expects you to take the safe route, not the shorter, hazardous one. If there isn't a safe way to get where you need to go, let your supervisor know. The supervisor will see to it that you are provided a safe means of access. Even if the job will only take a few minutes, it isn't worth risking your safety and health for those few minutes. Wear personal protection to safeguard your body parts. Use proper, well-maintained equipment. Don't improvise to save time. Ladders, steps, and walkways are built to insure your safety, as well as for your convenience.



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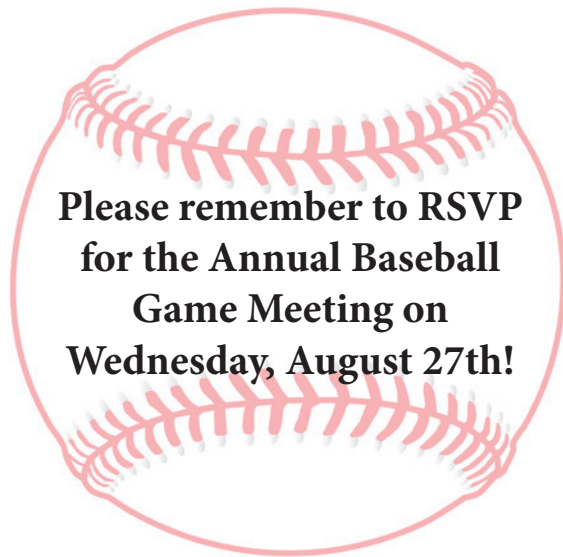
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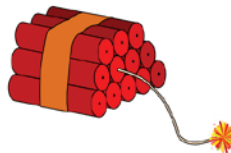
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Report on DEP's Draft Technical Guidance on Blaster's License Suspension and Revocation Procedures

By Randy May, General Manager - Mine Drilling Services, LLC

The following is a brief overview of the procedure of the Draft Technical Guidance that was discussed during an explosives industry outreach meeting.

When a complaint or a violation of regulations has come to the attention of DEP:

1. An initial investigation is done by the Explosives Inspector and submitted to District Mine Office and report filed.
 - a. If it is considered a serious offense such as flyrock, not clearing and safeguarding blast area, gas migration, damage to real property, or blasting without required permits, deliberate violations, or multiple offenses, a letter will be sent to blaster stating that they are considering suspension of blaster's license.
2. The District Mining Office will conduct a thorough investigation.
3. DMO Investigation Report will be written no later than 30 days.
4. Informal meeting will be held at the request of blaster to review and discuss the violation and to attain any additional facts by a Panel, Chaired by the Chief, Division of Permitting and Compliance, and include Chief, Explosives and Safety Section, the jurisdictional District Mining Manager. The Blasting and Explosives Inspector should also participate.
5. Any decision about suspension will be decided by a three person panel; Chief, Division of Compliance, Chief of Explosives, and District Mining Manager.
6. If a conference is requested, then the conference will be held prior to suspension.
7. This is an appealable action and can be appealed to the Environmental Hearing Board.

The above is a brief overview, for more details, see the full Draft Technical Guidance, DEP ID: 562-2402-501 at the Department's web site at www.elibrary.dep.state.pa.us.

The Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter submitted comments on the Blasting Technical Guidance document to the PA DEP. That letter is featured on page 11.



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Note From the Editor

If you have any articles or pictures you would like to share with the rest of the Eastern PA ISEE community, please email them to kristink@vibratechinc.com.

Next year the Eastern PA Chapter will celebrate its 20th Anniversary! Please email photos, both past and present, to include in our celebration issue.



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July 3, 2014

Commonwealth Of Pennsylvania
Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Mining Programs
Richard Lamkie, Chief, Explosives and Safety
Cambria District Mining Office
286 Industrial Park Road
Ebensburg, PA 15931

RE: DEP ID No: 562-2402-501 Blaster's License Suspension and Revocation Procedure
[44 Pa.B. 2705] [Saturday, May 3, 2014]

Dear Mr. Lamkie:

The Eastern PA Chapter International Society of Explosives Engineers appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Blaster's License Suspension and Revocation Procedure in the Technical Guidance Document No. 562-2402-501.

While we believe there is a need for a uniform, transparent procedure to investigate, review and take appropriate enforcement actions for violations of the statutory and regulatory blasting requirements, we find the Technical Guidance Document No. 562-2402-501 is flawed as presented.

The License Suspension Matrix is overwhelmingly subjective and any enforcement action based on its use would be seen as arbitrary and capricious in nature. The use of a matrix or point based system for suspension or revocation must be objective and yield the same outcome regardless of who conducts the investigation.

Definitions are provided for "Serious Violations" and "Deliberate Violations". Based on the definition provided in "Serious Violations" near misses (no injury or property damage) are treated the same as actual incidents that result in injury to persons and/or property damage. While we do not contend that a near miss dismisses that an incident took place, it should not be viewed with the same weight as an incident where actual injury to person or property damage occurred. Under the definition of

Continued on page 12



Blaster's License Suspension Continued

"Deliberate Violations" both willfully and through gross negligence are viewed as the same. There are numerous examples in tort, statutory and regulatory law where gross negligence is NOT viewed with the same weight as willfully (intentionally) violating state law or regulations. We recommend a definition for gross negligence be provided and be viewed on a lessor scale than willful disregard.

Under the Investigation section there is no timeline requirement, only a mention that it take place as soon as possible. We recommend that a set time frame be given for the investigation to take place.

In both the Investigation and DMO Investigative Report section there are items listed that "SHOULD" be included in the reports. We recommend changing the language to "SHALL" include. This will add to the uniformity of the process if all reports contain the same information.

The Informal Meetings, if requested by the blaster, are scheduled to take place in Harrisburg. We would recommend that these meetings take place at the District Mining Office to make them more assessable to the parties in question. The Guidance Document also requires the Blaster to notify the Department if he/she wishes to have council present before the Department is required to provide the report to the Blaster. We recommend that the Department provide the Blaster with the incident report at least 10 days prior to the Informal Meeting and the Blaster notify the Department at least 5 days prior to the meeting if he/she wishes to retain council.

Under Violation History, the Blaster receives negative points or additional penalties for past violations, and no time frame is given for using a blaster's past history. We recommend that 3 years is an adequate time frame to use as blaster's history, this is the same time period in which blast reports are required to be maintained. We also recommend that a blaster's positive past history be used for "good credit" as well.

Prior to Final Action taking place, the Blaster must be provided a copy of the Blasting License Suspension Action Summary Report and given the opportunity to request a settlement conference. No time frame is provided for requesting the conference or where it will take place. It is not stated who will represent the Department, if council is allowed to be present, and if there is an appeals process. We recommend that a timeline be established and guidelines on who is going to be present at the settlement conference be established.

Therefore, The Eastern PA Chapter International Society of Explosives Engineers, requests this technical guidance document be withdrawn, and the Department, The Eastern PA Chapter ISEE work together for a more effective solution in the technical guidance document. The Eastern PA Chapter ISEE stands committed to this effort.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Mueller
President, Eastern PA Chapter ISEE

Regulatory Protocol Meeting held by PA DEP



The PA Department of Environmental Protection held a meeting in June at the Moshannon District Mining Office in Clearfield County, PA. Industry stakeholders attended the meeting to formulate new regulatory protocol. The meeting was attended by 18 industry members representing the ISEE Mid-Atlantic and Eastern PA Chapters as well as 3 representatives from PA DEP. This collaborative effort has been very successful over the years combining industry and regulatory input into more workable and meaningful regulation.



Tony Sosnoskie
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