

The Tuscaloosa News

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TUSCALOOSA, NORTHPOPE, WEST ALABAMA

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4 DEAD, 9 MISSING IN MINE BLASTS

Worst U.S. mining disaster in 17 years

By Johnny Karpis
and Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writers

BROOKWOOD | At least four coal miners are dead and nine more are missing and presumed dead following two explosions in Jay Walker Resources Blue Creek Mine No. 3, North America's deepest mine.

It is believed to be the deadliest U.S. mining disaster since 1984, when 27 people were killed in a Utah mine.

Officials at the mining company said officials at the mine following the six miners were injured following the initial explosion Sunday at 5:11 p.m., which was caused by a rock falling on a battery charger. Explosions from the rockslide caused methane gas in the mine to ignite.

"I had just gotten a drink of water and walked out into the entry, and the next thing I know, I hit like I was hit a forklift," said Michael Miles, 42, one of the injured workers. He was in good condition Monday at TCH Regional Medical Center.

A rescue crew of 10 men started the mine to pull out other injured workers when the second explosion occurred, trapping three of the original six wounded workers in the mine as well as the rescue team. They were about 1,000 feet



Chuck Gumbert worked in the No. 3 coal mine, in background, for five years and knew some of those killed in Sunday's blasts. "They were all good men," Gumbert said. "Those men that got trapped in there were hard workers. Man you just wouldn't forget."

'They went in after their brothers'

By Steve Gumbert
and Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writers

BROOKWOOD | When the world is not that big, men were down in the Jay Walker Blue Creek No. 3 mine, a private group of volunteers jumped to action.

As they headed to retrieve their brothers, a second explosion was felt, almost certainly killing the men.

"These men are heroes," said Don Forester, chief executive officer of J. Robinson, parent company of Jay Walker Resources.

Rescue officials suspended the mine Monday because of the burning inside the mine. Walker Resources officials said there is little hope of those people surviving.

The rescue teams were withdrawn from the mine at 6:30 a.m. Men were of elevated levels of coal dust were possible. A damage control system that pumps water into the mine also hampered efforts.

"The longer it takes to get the larger the chance the men are successful," said David J. ...

Inside







BLUE CREEK COAL



**Initial Entry
Teams**



Hidden Dangers

Critical Incident Stress





Initial Entry Teams

Initial Entry Teams

- **Event will determine the skills needed**

Initial Entry Teams

- **Team staffing considerations**
- **Missing miners or men down = heavier medical support**
- **Fires or explosion = heavier mine rescue support**



Initial Entry Teams

- **When working in hostile environments or searching for missing miners, consider the value of Mine Rescue trained Advanced Life Support personnel at and inby the FAB**

Advanced Care Procedures



Initial Entry Teams

- **Every team needs equipment to meet the needs of the event**





Initial Entry Teams

- **Every team needs members who focus solely on mine rescue procedures/map/etc.**



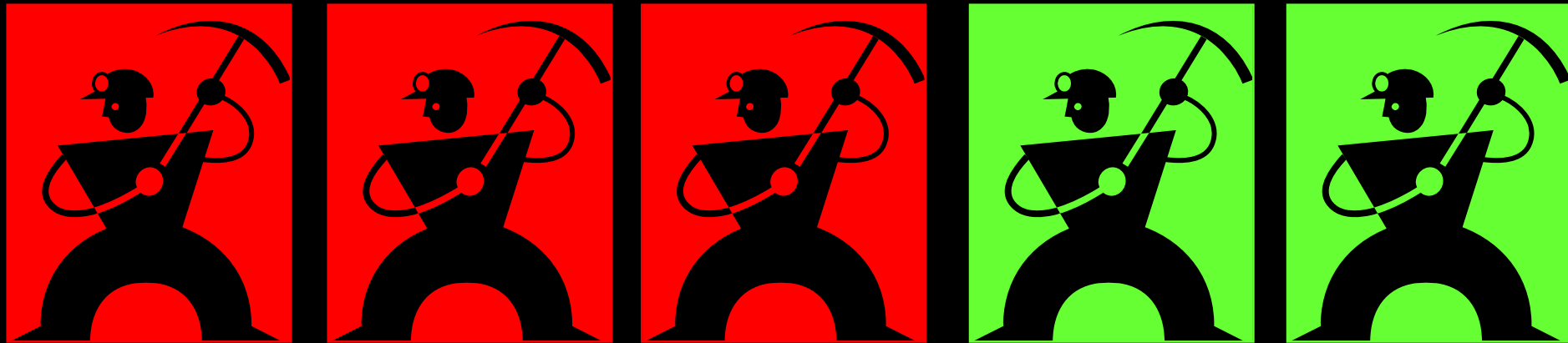
Hidden Dangers



Hidden Dangers Blood & Body Fluids

- **Look beneath your seats**
- **If you are one of five with envelopes, open and share the colored disc with someone**
- **Those who received a colored disc now share it with someone else**

Hidden Dangers Blood & Body Fluids



- **Three of the five miners found carried a communicable disease**

Hidden Dangers Blood & Body Fluids

- **Initial care providers treated miners when found**
- **Others took over care at the FAB**
- **Even more assisted with care and transfer at the surface**
- **Results... three patients and nine care providers are contaminated**

Hidden Dangers

Blood & Body Fluids

- Understanding the mode of communicable disease transmission can protect the team
- Disease is transmitted in one of three ways...
- **Direct contact**
- **Indirect contact**
- **Droplet infection**
- Break the mode of transmission and you are safe
- Other considerations...



Decontamination Station





Critical Incident Stress



Critical Incident Stress

- **A natural response to a very unnatural event!**
- **Understanding and responding to its impact:**
 - **On the families**
 - **On the teams**
 - **On others**



The Only Difference





Critical Incident Stress

- **Mine Disaster**
- **Families**
- **At the onset of a disaster loved ones usually feel shock and dismay--they want information and hope**
- **Initial needs...clergy versus counselors**
- **Remember the role of a mine is to provide access to this service--don't push assistance on anyone, but make it available**

Critical Incident Stress

- **Teams**
- **Parallels between mine rescue procedures and CISD...providing a means to vent**
- **Be aware of sign and symptoms of CIS...**
- **Monitor your teams and make sure they have access to EAP**
- **To learn more about CISD talk with your EAP**

Keep them safe!



