



New Mexico Tech

# NEW MEXICO BUREAU OF MINE SAFETY

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## November 2011 Newsletter

### Guest Column

This month's guest column is by Captain Mike Waring, New Mexico State Police dealing with active shooter scenarios. Captain Waring entered the New Mexico State Police in 1992 and was stationed in Vaughn, NM for two years. In 1994, Waring was transferred to the Governor Security Bureau and provided Dignitary Protection for Governor Gary Johnson for four years. In 1998, Waring was transferred to the NM State Police Training Bureau where he spent ten years as a training officer and was promoted to the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain while assigned to the training bureau. Waring was also the Search and Recovery Team (Dive Team) Commander for ten years. Waring is currently the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Liaison Officer.

### Active Shooter Scenario at Mining Facilities

On October 5, 2011 at approximately 4:15 AM, Shareef Allman, 49, of San Jose, is accused of opening fire on about 15 other Lehigh Southwest Cement Plant employees gathered at a meeting at the Cupertino, California quarry. Three employees died and six others were wounded. After the shooting, Allman fled the scene. After a 27-hour manhunt, Allman was located and confronted by law enforcement. Allman was shot several times and ultimately died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Allman was angered by what he believed to be racist treatment at the quarry. The shooting came after several instances of him displaying erratic behavior.

Professionals in the mining industry go to tremendous lengths to ensure the safety of their workers. Active shooter scenarios are rare in work places, but it is an important scenario for which businesses should prepare. There is no exact profile for active shooters, but employers can take measures to protect their employees.

### **Lockdown, Don't Run**

While each incident is unique, active shooter scenarios share some commonalities that help in prepara-

tion efforts. Typically, a shooter is seeking "easy" targets.

A shooter will use his familiarity with a facility to inflict the most damage. Shooters are usually looking for large gatherings, narrow hallways, and other ambush scenarios.

If gunshots are heard or reported, employees are advised to lockdown immediately. It is not advisable to run or otherwise evacuate a building where one can stay in a secure position.

As with other facilities, mines and mine facilities often have alarms for fires and other emergencies that signal employees to evacuate. While these alarms are vital to ensuring the safety of workers, they can also be used by shooters to draw victims into uncovered positions. An alarm followed by gunshots should prompt employees to not evacuate. Secure locations should be assumed.

If you are in an office, close blinds, and lock and cover windows and doors. A shooter that does not see potential victims will usually move on to different areas.

### **Ensure Communication Abilities**

Because shooters will typically block exits or try to redirect the flow of potential victims to vulnerable locations, it is important that employees assume secure locations at the first warning of danger. In these secure locations, they should have the ability to communicate with law enforcement and emergency personnel. If no communication is available, a shelter-in-place approach should be taken.

Facilities should have three means of communication: A hard line phone, a cell phone and a two-way radio. Knowing when to call and what to report is an important way employees can aid law enforcement and emergency responders.

If the shooter is not close to you, and others in the

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facility would have the ability to place an emergency call, do not call for assistance. Unless you are in an immediate danger or contain a critical piece of information, an overload of calls can slow the law enforcement response.

When contacting law enforcement from a secure location, witnesses are urged to report any information they have that might be helpful to law enforcement. Is the gunman acting alone or possibly in coordination with others? What type of weaponry is being used? What is the location of the shooter? How many victims are involved? These are just a few of the questions that may be asked. To the extent that an individual's safety is not jeopardized in gathering this information, this information can assist in the quick resolution of an active shooter scenario.

## **Develop Extraction Plans**

Have a plan to extract. A common tactic of active shooters is to pose as rescue or law enforcement personnel. Through a locked door, the shooter may identify himself as a responder. If contact can be made with police outside the building, verify the presence of their officers inside the building. Use communications and a common person(s) to relay critical information to you before extracting.

## **Know the Situation, Trust Law Enforcement Training**

Officers are trained to attack the threat immediately if it is determined that it truly is an active shooter and not a hostage holder.

An active shooter is someone that is trying to kill people. He will have no other motives. An active shooter does not want to steal, take hostages or commit any other crimes.

When communicating the threat to law enforcement, officers need to know the difference so they do not escalate a situation like a hostage rescue that can have the chance of being negotiated to a resolution. Employees should not attempt to negotiate with an active shooter. As with the incident in Cupertino, California, law enforcement will not hesitate in using deadly force.

Do not provoke an active shooter. Confrontation of a shooter should only be done if absolutely necessary. The best course of action is to shelter in place, communicate the threat to authorities, and await instructions. Law enforcement is trained to contain situations quickly.

## **Be Prepared**

For many employees, discussion about active shooter scenarios is difficult. Active shooter drills may also inform potential active shooters on more effective ways to carry out attacks. Be aware of this risk. While lockdown drills are helpful in preparing employees for an active shooter, they also prepare workplaces for other scenarios that might arise. Lock-down and shelter-in-place drills are helpful in preparing employees for affiliated or unaffiliated active shooters, but they can also be helpful in preparing employees for weather-related or other dangerous events. For these reasons, a lockdown drill or plan can be effective without raising anxieties. The recommended actions are not necessarily intuitive. Employees will not always execute the correct response by default. Coaching, training and practice will be needed.

Human Resources and other workplace solutions can play a vital role in detecting and addressing concerns of employees. While not every employee with concerns has the potential or desire to carry out a violent attack, a quick response from management to address concerns or grievances can help avoid escalating tensions.

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## **Exposure Monitoring at MNM Mines**

I am hearing that the emphasis on exposure monitoring my MSHA inspectors is an item that operators may want to be concerned about.. Please read below from MSHA's December, 2010 News Release regarding this initiative

*MSHA announced an increased focus on exposure monitoring at metal and nonmetal mines throughout the country to ensure better worker protection from overexposure to harmful airborne contaminants. Agency efforts will include stakeholder outreach, edu-*

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cation and training, and enhanced implementation of existing standards. In particular, MSHA will focus on 30 Code of Federal Regulations 56.5002 and 57.5002, which require mine operators to conduct dust, gas, mist and fume surveys for harmful airborne contaminants' fumes to determine the adequacy of control measures. A stakeholder briefing was held today at MSHA headquarters in Arlington, Va., to outline the initiative aimed at reducing illnesses and diseases due to such overexposures, and explain MSHA's enforcement approach on complying with the standards.

"We want to ensure that miners are protected from overexposure to harmful contaminants and mine operators have required safety and health programs in place to meet that objective," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

"A number of diseases and illnesses can be caused by overexposure to harmful airborne contaminants, including lead poisoning, nervous system damage, lung cancer, asbestosis, lung inflammation and scarring, bronchitis and metal fume fever," said Dr. Gregory Wagner, deputy assistant secretary for mine safety and health. "Some health conditions can take a long time to develop and may not be apparent at the time of exposure. Exposure monitoring programs to identify unhealthy levels of contaminants are critical to disease prevention."

In a program policy letter issued in October, 2010, MSHA reiterated that mine operators have the primary responsibility for protecting the health of miners and must demonstrate compliance rather than rely on enforcement interventions. By conducting surveys in the workplace to determine the adequacy of exposure controls, miners are much less likely to be affected by the hazardous materials they encounter at work.

"This is a first step that includes a wide variety of industry stakeholder outreach, education, development of training programs and enhanced enforcement of existing standards," said Main. "We will be working closely with the mining community, national and state mining associations, labor organizations, MSHA's Small Mines Office and others to implement this initia-

tive. Ultimately, the goal is improved health protection for metal and nonmetal miners, and help for all mine operators to better understand and meet the requirements of this standard."

A procedure instruction letter has been issued to provide mine inspectors instructions on determining compliance with MSHA's standards for surface and underground metal and nonmetal mines pertaining to surveys for airborne contaminants required under 30 C.F.R. 56.5002 and 57.5002., available at <http://www.msha.gov/regs/complian/PILS/2010/PIL10-IV-01.asp>. Mine operator assistance in planning and implementing a system to conduct surveys to determine the adequacy of control measures is available at [www.msha.gov/S&HINFO/ExposureGuidance/ExposureGuidance.asp](http://www.msha.gov/S&HINFO/ExposureGuidance/ExposureGuidance.asp)

## +55 Age Group and Workplace Injuries

The AARP Magazine, Sept/Oct. 2011 issue had a great article by Leslie Quander Wooldridge on older worker injuries. A portion of that article stated:

*Older workers are the fastest-growing segment of the employed population—and now they're also injured more often..... Workers 55-plus made up 17 percent of non-fatal injuries on the job in 2009 –up from 12 percent in 2003—according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Most suffered “acute traumatic injuries” such as fractures and sprains. And when older workers get hurt, they face added hurdles: “ It takes them longer to return to work once they recover, and their injuries are more severe,” says Dawn Castillo of the CDC’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. So is your workplace a hazard? Watch for problems such as unsecured cords and objects, Castillo says. Clean up spills, and wear sturdy shoes and other appropriate attire. If you have vision trouble (which can lead to tripping), talk to your doctor. And report safety issues to your employer.*

According to the CDC Leading Causes of Injuries to Older Workers:

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- Falls on the same level (like tripping)
- Overexertion
- Contact with objects, equipment
- Falls to a lower level

## **Training**

The current Training Schedule through November can be found on our web site:

<http://www.bmi.state.nm.us/navTrng.htm>

Please take time to look it over. To schedule a class, please call Chris at (505) 553-1535.

## ***New Mexico Mining Safety Board***

The New Mexico Mining Safety Board met in Albuquerque on September 15th. The meeting continued discussions on modifying regulations dealing with emergency notification requirements. Also discussed was SMI consultation with the MSB on fees for training and for coal official's recertification. The MSB also approved an Open Meetings Act Resolution. Discussions on emergency notification clarifications will continue at the next meeting scheduled for 8 AM, January 12th in the Silver City area.

The MSB presently has an opening for a labor representative. Please call the SMI for information if there is interest.

## ***2012 New Mexico Mine Health and Safety Conference***

We are busy planning for our 2012 conference to be held **April 30, May 1 & 2, 2012**. Our next planning meeting will be December 8th in Socorro at the Bureau of Mine Safety. Our theme is "***Your Path To Success***". Please contribute your thoughts or efforts to the conference and consider joining the committee.

## **Mine Health and Safety is**



**In New Mexico!**