

**FATAL  
ACCIDENTS**

## REPORT OF FATAL ACCIDENT 1998

Name of Victim:	Gary L. Laudenslager
Address:	Gratz, PA
Name of Mine:	Tracey Slope Mine
Name of Company:	Summit Anthracite, Inc.
Date of Accident:	July 16, 1998

### DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCIDENT

On Thursday, July 16, 1998, an explosion occurred in the monkey heading off the No. 2 Level East Gangway, near the No. 46 breast, resulting in the death of Gary L. Laudenslager and caused injuries to another worker. The victim, age 23, was married with three children and according to company records, was employed as an underground worker for approximately 5 years.

### CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT

The direct cause of the accident was an unplanned detonation of explosives near the No. 46 breast. Although testing was conducted on evidence gathered from the scene, the source of origin for the detonation could not be identified due to the extent of damage from the blast. Tests conducted by the investigation team indicated that stray current was not a contributing factor to the cause of the accident. A significant factor increasing the severity of the accident was improper storage and handling of explosives and detonators. The following factors were considered as a possible cause of the accident:

1. Undetonated explosives in the north borehole remaining from a misfire may have been drilled into from the south borehole.
2. Coal or rock may have fallen striking the detonators and/or explosives left on the floor of the monkey level near the No. 46 breast.
3. An unintentional detonation of the wrong firing line possibly connected to an unconfined shot used to free hanging material may have detonated other explosives near the No. 46 breast.

### RECOMMENDATION

1. Explosives and detonators must be stored separately and kept in day boxes until ready to be used.
2. Only one day's supply of detonators and explosives shall be inside a mine.
3. Only permissible explosives shall be used underground.
4. Leg wires on detonators must remain shunted until just before firing.
5. All firing lines shall be shunted immediately before and after firing.
6. Notify all persons prior to blasting.
7. All areas of the mine shall be well ventilated.
8. Tests for mine gases shall be made before and after firing and periodically throughout the work shift.