

DMM Safety Alert: **Electrocution Near Miss**

On July 20, 2015, a contractor employee was completing repairs in a metal enclosure when he slung a welding lead over his shoulder in order to gather slack in the cable. As he pulled on the cable, a bare spot in the lead came into contact with his unprotected, sweaty skin at the base of his neck and gave him an electric shock. On-site personnel responded and found the miner coherent, but complaining of chest pain. A burn mark was present at the top of his shoulders, just below his neck. On-site personnel called 911 and when Emergency Medical Services arrived, they found the injured miner had an abnormal heart rhythm. The miner was taken to the hospital where he was evaluated and treated, and released a few hours later.

To avoid this type of incident from occurring, the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

- Miners must conduct pre-operational inspections of their tools and equipment prior to use each shift. Any defects found must be reported to the certified foreman and defective equipment removed from service or properly repaired prior to use.
- Task training for welders should include the importance of maintaining leads, clamps, and electrode holders in order to minimize shock hazards.
- Welders should be cautioned when working in hot and/or wet environments to be mindful of the increased risk of shock due to sweat and water soaked clothing and skin.

Electrode holders and leads with missing or deteriorated insulation should be repaired or removed from service!!

