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Petition

JUL 16 2012

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
STANDARDS BOARD

Dear OSHSB,

My name is Robert Jungers. I have worked at the Borax Mine 27 years. 26 years of that time has been spent working in the primary process department. Isolation Lock Out and Tag Out has changed a lot since I first hired on and it's not for the better. We are in a crisis with the current methods that the company has adopted and I fear that if we do not act now to make some changes to regulate the current policy we will soon see a tragedy.

There is some history with me trying to work on the company's position, well over a decade now. I have spoken with the company at all levels on site, written letters to them and MSHA, many grievances have been written, and Unfair Labor Practices have been charged with the NLRB.

MSHA has sided with me but their hands are tied because the regulations fall short. They had an isolation drop some out of the system when I've called them out but, the company still kept using it.

Problems started when we went from everybody hanging locks in the field to a system that uses a Lock Box and computer generated Isolations. The Isolations are incorrect most of the time and the supervisors do not have to verify them before handing them out. The work to be isolated is not understood and the operators just de-energize what is on the list then lock it out. Maintenance goes to work on an energized system.

This could all be avoided if the Isolations had to be verified prior to the work being done with everyone involved. There was a time that this was done. It's scary; we have to many close calls. We need help.

Subchapter 7. General Industry Safety Orders
Group 2 Safe Practices and Personal Protection
Article 7. Miscellaneous Safe Practices

In this section we would like to see that the Supervisor must verify all Isolations prior to putting them together and assigning them. Currently this is not done. The authorized employee does not know the work do be done and the purpose of the isolation, and in some cases neither does the Supervisor. Although the employee is Authorized and the Supervisor should know the operation many times they don't.

So the Authorized employee performs the Isolation Lockout blind, and the Supervisor is free from any accountability. This section needs to be beefed up to make the company agents write the books correctly and assign the work correctly.

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Thanks Robert Jungers
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