Two Lone Worker Deaths in 24 Hours

 On January 25, 2017, a miner was found in an underground limestone mine after failing to exit the mine at the end of his shift. The miner was found under material that had fallen on him from a rib in an area of the mine that had been barricaded to prevent entry due to bad roof and rib conditions.

 On January 26, 2017, a coal miner was discovered entangled at a conveyor belt drive, also after failing to exit the mine at the end of his shift. In both instances the victims were working alone and in restricted areas where there were hazardous conditions.

What Could Have Prevented These Deaths

1. Never enter hazardous areas that have been barricaded or otherwise identified as unsafe to enter.
2. Develop and train workers on a method that clearly alerts them not to enter hazardous areas. Enforce this with disciplinary action if protocol/area is breached.
3. When possible, do not let workers work alone, especially in hazardous areas. If work must be done solo, set up a plan for communication.
4. Before any solo work is done identify known and potential hazards.
5. Never perform work on a moving conveyor belt or other moving equipment or machinery.
6. Never perform work on any machine, equipment, or vehicle without taking following LOTO procedures – de-energize electrical power, lock and tag the disconnect with your lock and tag, and block parts that can move against motion.

https://arlweb.msha.gov/Alerts/January-Coal-MNM-Fatal-Alert-2017.pdf