

06-127

For Immediate Release
December 13, 2006

TECK-CORONA OPERATING CORPORATION FINED \$60,000 FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY VIOLATION

MARATHON, Ont. – Teck-Corona Operating Corporation, a Toronto-based company that is involved in the operation of David Bell Mine near Marathon, was fined \$60,000 on December 12, 2006 for a violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act involving a mine elevator.

On August 21, 2005, two workers were descending in a cage conveyance (elevator) when it became stuck and jammed after a 1,542-kilogram (3,400-pound) bundle of material, attached for transport to the conveyance's underside, got caught on some timber furnishings in the shaft. The incident resulted in a pileup of about 137-metres (450 feet) of hoist cable because the hoist operator at the surface could not be alerted. The workers had attempted to use a shaft bell cord to signal the hoist operator to stop lowering the conveyance, but the shaft bell cord was not working.

The shaft bell cord is an important means of communication in the shaft, especially in areas where radios do not work, and, when pulled, the shaft bell cord is supposed to initiate a signal to alert the hoist operator. It hangs vertically between levels of the shaft and is mechanically secured to a signal box inside the shaft. The shaft cord bell had been broken prior to the date of the incident and had not been repaired.

When the workers realized the shaft bell cord didn't work and that the hoist cable attached to the conveyance was piling up, they climbed out of the cage into a "man way compartment" (a safe space in the shaft). No injuries were reported. The incident occurred at David Bell Mine in Bomby Township, about 43 kilometres (27 miles) east of Marathon.

Teck-Corona Operating Corporation pleaded guilty, as an employer, to failing to ensure the shaft bell cord was maintained in good condition. This was contrary to Section 25(1)(b) of the act.

The fine was imposed by Justice of the Peace Richard Le Sarge of the Ontario Court of Justice in Marathon. In addition, the court imposed a 25-per-cent victim fine surcharge, as required by the Provincial Offences Act. The surcharge is credited to a special provincial government fund to assist victims of crime.

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Court Information at a Glance

Location:	Ontario Court of Justice Town Office 4 Hemlo Drive, Council Chambers Marathon, Ontario
Judge:	Justice of the Peace Richard Le Sarge
Date / Time:	December 12, 2006, 12:30 p.m.
Defendant:	Teck-Corona Operating Corporation
Matter:	Occupational Health & Safety

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