



To the Mining Community:

Last year I began providing the mining industry, trainers and grantees quarterly information on the types of fatal accidents that are occurring in mining and the best practices to prevent them. Below is a summary of information from the third quarter of 2012. We are also releasing recently finalized data that show fatality and injury rates in 2011 were the lowest ever.

Six coal miners and five metal/nonmetal miners died in work-related accidents, for a total of eleven mining fatalities from July 1 to September 30, 2012.

In the coal mining industry, one miner was killed as a result of a Machinery accident. Two miners were fatally injured as a result of Fall of Rib, Roof, Face or Back accidents. Three miners were killed in Powered Haulage accidents.

In the metal/nonmetal mining sector, two miners died as a result of Fall of Person accidents. One miner died in a Machinery accident. One miner lost his life due to a Falling Material accident and another miner was killed in a Powered Haulage accident. One (20%) of the fatalities involved a contract employee.

MSHA has placed an analysis of the mining fatalities during the third quarter of 2012 on its website at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp> along with best practices to help mining operations avoid fatalities like them, and for trainers to include in miner training.

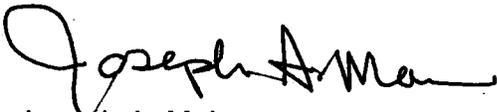
We have seen a decrease in overall fatality and injury rates in the mining industry as a whole. Recently finalized data show that in 2011, fatality and injury rates were the lowest in history. The fatal injury rate for mining as a whole was .0114 per 200,000 hours worked, and the all-injury rate was 2.73 per 200,000 hours worked. In the Metal/Nonmetal mining sector, the fatal injury rate was .0084 per 200,000 hours worked and the all-injury rate was 2.28 per 200,000 hours worked. In the Coal mining sector, the fatal injury rate was .0156 per 200,000 hours worked and the all-injury rate was 3.38 per 200,000 hours worked. This means fewer miners are being killed, fewer miners are being injured, and more miners than ever before are going home to their family and friends safe and healthy at the end of their shifts. While mining deaths and injuries have reached historic lows, more actions are needed to prevent mining injuries, illnesses and deaths.

Fatalities are preventable. Many mines operate every shift of every day, year in and year out, without a fatality or a lost-time injury. Mining workplaces can and must be made safe for miners. Fatalities can be prevented by using effective **safety and health management programs** in your workplaces. **Workplace examinations** for hazards – pre-shift and on-shift every shift – can identify and eliminate hazards that kill and injure miners. And providing effective and appropriate **training** will ensure that miners recognize and understand hazards and how to control or eliminate them. Mine operators and Part 46 and Part 48 trainers need to train miners and mine supervisors on the conditions that lead to deaths and injuries and measures to prevent and avoid them. Miners must be free to exercise their rights under the Mine Act to be full participants in maintaining a safe and healthful workplace.

MSHA has taken a number of actions to identify mines with health and safety problems and initiated several outreach and enforcement initiatives, including “Rules to Live By,” a fatality prevention program highlighting safety and health standards most frequently cited during fatal accident investigations. We believe those actions, along with initiatives by the mining industry, can make a positive difference. MSHA has posted more information and analysis of the fatal accidents that occurred on the MSHA website at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp>

No miner should have to die on the job just to earn a paycheck. We must all work together to ensure that does not happen. We are united in our determination that all miners go home safe and healthy at the end of each shift.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Main". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph A. Main  
Assistant Secretary of Labor for  
Mine Safety and Health