

Examination/Testing/ Scaling – Ground Control for Underground Gold Mines



Best Practice Series

BP-72

Ground fall accidents have claimed many lives and resulted in nonfatal injuries to many miners in underground U.S. gold mines.

Proper examination and testing are critical first steps in the prevention of injuries due to ground falls. These activities are necessary to identify hazardous ground so that affected areas can be taken down, properly supported, or dangered off.

When Examining and Testing, You Should:

- Never assume an area is safe.
- Always make a visual examination first.
- Always stay under stable ground.
- Include face areas and surrounding areas that may have been affected by blasting.
- Use sufficient lighting.
- Use elevated platforms or lifts, where necessary, in high back areas.
- Check test holes, if available, to detect fractures or separations in the ground.

When Scaling, You Should:

- Always stay under stable ground.
- Take precautions to protect yourself and others from scaled material.
- Make sure that you have secure footing.

- Use proper equipment - such as a scaling bar of sufficient length.
- Pry Up, Not Down!
- Work under a canopy if a mechanical scaler is used.
- Eliminate ground hazards as soon as possible.

If a Ground Hazard Cannot Be Corrected Immediately, You Should:

- Post a warning to prevent miners from entering the area.
- Install a barrier to impede entry if the area is to be left unattended.

Always communicate any concerns from examination, testing, or scaling to your supervisor and other miners.

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