

News Release



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MSHA announces major initiative to bolster mine safety *Safety Targets Training Program to focus on eliminating common causes of fatalities*

BECKLEY, W.Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) unveiled a new safety initiative designed to highlight the leading causes of mine fatalities in the 21st century. The Safety Targets Training Program was introduced in conjunction with the agency’s annual Training Resources Applied to Mining (TRAM) conference held at the Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley before nearly 500 attendees.

“In spite of the dramatic drop in mining fatalities over the last century and recent declines to all time lows, we are still experiencing unnecessary fatal accidents,” said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health Richard E. Stickler. “Most of these fatalities occurred not in major disasters, but one and two at a time. While they do not get the attention that some larger mine accidents have received, they are just as tragic and they are preventable.”

MSHA’s Safety Targets Training Program will focus on addressing and eliminating the most common causes of repeat fatal accidents that occurred from 2000 to 2008. Ten training modules are in development for coal and metal/nonmetal mines. These 20 topics account for 75 percent of the causes of fatalities that occurred in the targeted nine-year time period. The materials will reach the mining industry through outreach efforts, targeted mass mailings and the MSHA Web site at www.msha.gov.

Leading Fatality Categories in Coal Mines

- roof / rib falls
- operating equipment (surface)
- hit by equipment (underground)
- fall from elevations
- maintenance
- lock and tag
- operating equipment (underground)
- block against motion
- unsafe act
- hit by equipment (surface)

Leading Categories in Metal/Nonmetal Mines

- fall from elevations
- operating equipment (surface)
- maintenance
- lock and tag
- block against motion
- hit by equipment (surface)
- pre-op
- roof / rib falls
- communication
- unsafe act

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