

Any community with active or abandoned mines, quarries or pits could become the scene of the next tragedy.

## STAY OUT-STAY ALIVE

For further information, contact:

Mine Safety and Health Administration  
(202) 693-9400

To report unsafe access to mines:  
(800) 746-1554

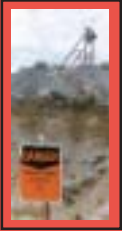
MSHA's web address:  
[www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov)



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## An Important Safety Message

Every year, dozens of people are injured or killed while exploring or playing on mine property. Consequently, the U.S. Department of Labor's

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) pioneered "Stay Out-Stay Alive," a public safety campaign to educate children and adults about the hazards at active and abandoned mine sites. The campaign is a partnership made up of dozens of federal and state agencies, private organizations, businesses and individuals. These groups visit schools and communities nationwide to distribute educational materials and discuss the importance of mining and its existing hazards.

## Mining's Essential Role in Our Lives

Mining is a fundamental component of the American economy. Over half of the electricity generated in the United States comes from coal. Sand, gravel, limestone and other rock products are used in the construction industry. Salt keeps wintry roads free of ice. Gold, silver, iron, copper and many other minerals are essential to our national prosperity.

Mines are located in every state-from small sand and gravel operations to complex underground coal, salt, limestone or metal mines. Many surface operations use some of the largest industrial equipment ever built. There are about 14,000 active and as many as 500,000 abandoned mines in the nation. As cities and towns spread into the surrounding countryside and more people visit remote locations, the possibility of contact with an active or abandoned mine increases.

## Mining's Hidden Dangers

The men and women employed in our nation's mines are trained to work in a safe manner. For the unauthorized explorer, hiker, off-roader or rockhound, however, the hazards are not always apparent. Active and abandoned mine sites have proven to be an irresistible-and sometimes deadly-draw for children and adults.



- \* Vertical shafts can be hundreds of feet deep. At the surface, they may be completely unprotected, hidden by vegetation, or covered by rotting boards.
- \* Horizontal openings may seem sturdy, but rotting timbers and unstable rock formations make cave-ins a real danger. Darkness and debris add to the hazards.
- \* Lethal concentrations of deadly gases (methane, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide) can accumulate in underground passages.
- \* Unused or misfired explosives can become unstable, and deadly vibrations from a touch or misstep can trigger an explosion.
- \* Hills of loose material in stockpiles or refuse heaps can easily collapse upon an unsuspecting biker or climber.
- \* Water-filled quarries and pits conceal rock ledges, old machinery and other hazards. The water can be deceptively deep and dangerously cold. Steep, slippery walls make exiting these swimming holes extremely difficult.

