



July 19, 2012

To the Mining Community:

Last year, I began providing the mining industry, trainers and grantees quarterly information on the types of accidents that are occurring in mining and the best practices to prevent them. Below is a summary of information from the first two quarters of 2012.

Ten coal miners and 9 metal/nonmetal miners died in work-related accidents, for a total of 19 mining fatalities during the first six months of 2012.

In the coal mining industry, three miners died from Slip or Fall accidents, and two from Rib Fall accidents. One miner was killed in each of the following accident classifications: Exploding Vessels Under Pressure, Other (Drowning), Handling Materials, Machinery, and Electrical. Five of these fatalities occurred on five consecutive weekends, and three of the fatalities involved supervisors. This is a particular warning flag for the mining industry.

In the metal/nonmetal mining sector, four persons are dead as a result of Powered Haulage accidents and two from Fall of Face/Rib/Highwall accidents. One miner was killed in each of the following accident classifications: Machinery, Falling Material and Fall of Person. One of the fatalities was a customer truck driver.

While this is the second lowest number of mining deaths recorded in mining mid year, we know these deaths are preventable.

MSHA has placed an analysis of the mining fatalities in the first half 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.

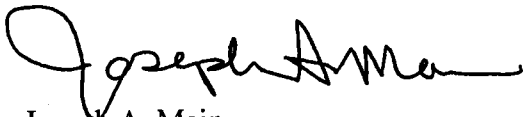
Fatalities are preventable. Many mines operate every shift of every day, year in and year out, without a fatality or a lost-time injury. Mining workplaces can and must be made safe for miners. Fatalities can be prevented by using effective **safety and health management programs** in your workplaces. **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.

You can now file your MSHA forms online at [www.MSHA.gov](http://www.MSHA.gov). It's easy, it's fast, and it saves you money!

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 fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

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