



DEPARTMENT: MINERALS AND ENERGY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
MPUMALANGA REGION
TEL: 013 – 656 1448
FAX: 013 – 6903288

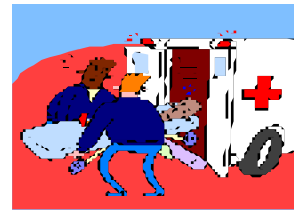
NEWSLETTER MPUMALANGA REGION AUGUST 2006

MINERALS AND ENERGY FOR PROSPERITY
AND DEVELOPMENT

INDEX

- 1 ACCIDENTS
- 2 FATAL ACCIDENTS
- 3 FATAL ACCIDENTS FROM OTHER REGIONS
- ACCIDENTS PER MINING GROUP
- 4 INFORMATION SHARING
- 4.1 SAFETY AT ABANDONED MINES
- 4.2 THE PITFALLS OF RISK ASSESSMENT
- 5 ANNUAL MEDICAL REPORT
- 6 HOLING INTO THE OLD WORKINGS
- 7 WATCH OUT FOR PERIOD AUGUST - DECEMBER
- 8 NEW TB STRAIN
- 9 EXAMINATIONS

1. ACCIDENTS



During the month of August 2006, the mines in this region reported 34 accidents, of which 3 were fatal accidents and 6 non-casualty accidents.

**The main accident categories were:-
August'06**

General accidents	15
Fall of ground	7
Transport and Mining	7
Machinery	5

2. FATAL ACCIDENTS

2.1 Evander Gold Mines 5# (2006/08/02)

A rock-drill operator was drilling the face of a raise, standing on the drilling platform made of timber and gum-planks. Whilst pulling his machine out from the face of the raise, he lost his balance and slipped into the side of the drilling platform which was not fully covering the ore-pass. The ore-pass had broken rock at the bottom, and was about 55m in length at 70 degrees inclination. The other three witnesses of the accident (two rock drill operators and the

and the winch operator) rushed to the bottom of the ore-pass which was equipped with a chute and standing platform to open the ore-pass, letting the broken rock to fall out and removing the body of the deceased.

2.2 Khutala Colliery (2006/08/02)

The continuous miner was in a process of cutting the first split. The initial cut to the right had been completed and the machine had been moved to the left hand cut. The cable handler apparently entered the place on the right hand side of the cut when the side wall collapsed on top of him.

2.3 Everest Platinum Mine (2006/08/03)

A team leader was fatally injured by a fall of ground, of about 2.5m thickness, from the face in an unsupported area. The ground conditions were poor as a result of the intersection of faults and joints. The hanging wall was drilled near vertically in order to bring down the weak strata which exacerbated the poor ground conditions.

3 FATAL ACCIDENTS FROM OTHER REGIONS

3.1 FREE-STATE REGION

A locomotive guard was fatally injured when he was run over by another locomotive guard in a haulage (He was not the locomotive guard of the locomotive that ran over him).

3.2 GAUTENG REGION

A winch operator was seriously injured when a deflecting snatch block which was secured by one eye-bolt, was pulled out by the winch during the cleaning process. The winch operator subsequently died at the hospital the same afternoon. He was signalling the other winch operator at the start of their rigging process.

3. GAUTENG REGION

A fitter's assistant was fatally injured when his body (neck) was twisted when his clothing was caught in the driveshaft of a moving front end loader at a surface site being cleared for rehabilitation.

3. ACCIDENTS PER MINING GROUP:-

	August		Year Prog.		Rate/1000	
	Inj.	Fat.	Inj.	Fat.	Inj.	Fat.
COAL MINES						
Eyesizwe	3	0	18	0	6.36	0
Sasol Coal	1	0	24	1	3.73	0.1
Ingwe Coal	24	1	48	2	7.08	0.29
Anglo Coal	1	0	25	0	3.85	0
Xstrata Coal	0	0	16	0	4.40	0
Metorex Coal	0	0	5	2	6.3	2.52
Total SA	2	0	9	0	14.0	0
Anker	0	0	1	0	2.31	0
Kangra	1	0	2	1	3.65	2.09
Private coalmines	4	0	9	2	13.69	3.04
GOLD & PLATINUM						
Harmony Gold	3	1	30	2	8.65	0.57
Metorex Gold	1	0	9	0	6.95	0
Simmer & Jack	0	0	1	0	3.31	0
Aquarius Platinum	0	1	5	1	6.12	1.22
African Rainbow Min.	1	0	4	0	7.87	0
Private gold & platinum	2	0	5	0	2.30	0
OTHER MINES						
Xstrata Alloys	0	0	3	0	6.60	0
Samancor	0	0	3	0	2.60	0
Other private mines	2	0	11	0	5.10	0
TOTAL	25	3	228	11	6.15	0.2

4. INFORMATION SHARING



4.1 SAFETY AT ABANDONED MINES

Abandoned mines can cause great safety hazards. Each year, a number of people are killed or injured in abandoned mines. Many of these structures contain dilapidated frames, open shafts and water-filled pits. The dangers that are found in the abandoned mines include unstable and decayed support structure, deadly gases and deficient oxygen, old explosives and toxic chemicals and unstable highwalls. Entrance to such an area puts a person at risk for hazards such as fall of ground and cave-ins.

The hazards are even greater today for unprepared illegal miners. Over the years as mines have been abandoned and left unattended, they have become increasingly unstable, unpredictable and dangerous. As a result the poor illegal miners who are tempted to enter the abandoned mine structures, face more serious risks than those confronted by the original miners.

The people are losing their lives as a result of accessing and mining illegally in abandoned mines. We appeal to anyone to anyone who might be familiar with any mine where people are illegally mining to report this matter to the office of the Department of Minerals and energy.

4.2 THE PITFALLS OF RISK ASSESSMENT

Section 11 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, Act 29 of 1996, place a general duty on every employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that employees are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, therefore it includes an implicit requirement for risk assessment. The level of detail of risk assessment should be proportionate to the level of intrinsic hazards.

Employers are expected to take reasonable steps to identify risks, e.g. by looking at appropriate sources of information, such as relevant legislation, appropriate guidance, suppliers' manuals and manufacturers' instructions. They should also look at and use relevant examples of good practice from within the industry. The risk assessment should include only what the employer could reasonably be expected to know; they would not be expected to anticipate risks that were not foreseeable.

Although risk assessment is a powerful tool, as with all tools, if it not used with care and understanding, the outcomes may well be totally incorrect and lead to bad decisions being made that are not supportable in reality. It is noted that because of such lack of understanding of the process and the perception by many that the risk matrix is the risk assessment, there have been some pitfalls identified in some of the risk assessment scrutinised at the mines.

Herewith the common pitfalls that have been identified in some of the risk assessments:

- Carrying out risk assessment to attempt to justify a decision that has already been made;
- Using a generic assessment when a site specific assessment is required;
- Carrying out risk assessment using inappropriate good practice;

- Only considering risk from one activity;
- Not involving a team of people in the assessment or not including employees with practical knowledge and experience of the activity being assessed;
- Ineffective use of consultants (mostly in small mines);
- Failure to identify all hazards associated with a particular activity;
- Failure to identify all possible consequences;
- Inappropriate use of data;
- Inappropriate use of risk criteria;
- Not doing anything with the results of the assessment; and
- Not linking hazards with the risk controls.

It is very disconcerting when such a crucial document is allowed to collect dust inside a rarely used drawer of the administration clerk, not even the risk manager's office. Such practice indicates a clear "paper exercise" by those involved. Failure to use risk assessments leads to failure to review it, and ultimately lack of awareness regarding risks and hazards pertaining to one's job. This will eventually lead to accidents and incidents that could have been prevented.

5. ANNUAL MEDICAL REPORT

In terms of section 16 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, Act 29 of 1996, the employer must submit the annual medical report to the Medical Inspector.

Due to numerous problems experienced regarding the capturing and interpretation of the recorded information, a new computerised system was developed for the capturing of the data received from the annual medical report.

Annual medical reports must still be compiled for a calendar year i.e. from January to December of each year and

must be submitted before the **end of February** of each year in order to compile the Mine Health and Safety Annual report for the inspectorate.

Annual Medical Reports should be sent directly to the Regional Office and NOT to Head Office as in the past.

6. HOLING INTO THE OLD WORKINGS

It has been noted with concern that in some of the mines unplanned holings into the old workings have occurred. In all cases the incident would have resulted in multiple fatalities due to drowning, suffocation and explosion of explosive gases.

In terms of the Mine Health and Safety Act, Act 29 of 1996, Section 11, the employer must do a proper risk assessment on the adjacent panel to be holed to identify all risks.

Also in terms of regulation 17(5) of MHS Act, the employer has to take reasonable precautions to ensure that the competent person (certificated surveyor) is aware at all times of workings being advanced. In terms of regulation 17(14)(h), 17(14)(b)(v) and 17(9), it states that the prescribed plans of the workings should be correct to within 3 months and accurately represent the workings.

7. WATCH OUT FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST TO DECEMBER

During the period from August to December (2000 - 2005) a total of 75 employees were fatally injured in the Mpumalanga mines. Although there is no clear trend in this regard, the table below illustrates why this period of the year can be considered as dangerous

	Fatalities					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
JAN	0	0	1	1	1	0
FEB	3	1	2	3	4	0
MAR	4	3	2	3	2	0
APR	3	1	0	1	3	1
MAY	3	2	0	1	1	2
JUN	2	2	2	3	1	2
JUL	3	1	2	4	2	1
TOTAL : JAN-JUL	18	10	9	16	14	6
AUG	2	2	2	2	2	4
SEP	0	1	1	2	2	1
OCT	3	1	3	0	4	2
NOV	4	5	4	4	0	5
DEC	3	2	4	4	1	5
TOTAL : AUG-DEC	12	11	14	12	9	17

Please pay special attention to the following measures:

- Always be alert of changing roof conditions!
- Follow safe procedures!
- Ensure that all persons are clear before moving equipment!
- Ensure that everyone is in a safe position when starting equipment or machinery!
- De-energise and always lockout!
- Moving parts of machine must be guarded!
- Ensure that an adequate risk assessment is conducted prior to commencing with work.
- An effective contractor health and safety management system must be in place and be implemented.
- All hazards associated with the job must be properly communicated to the affected persons before starting with the work.

- Employees must be encouraged to report all hazards to mine management and exercise their right to refuse to do work under dangerous conditions or to do dangerous work.
- Required tools and equipment to do the work must always be available.

8. NEW TB STRAIN

An extreme drug-resistant tuberculosis (9XDR-TB) has been diagnosed in KwaZulu-Natal. the World Health Organisation's Dr Ernesto Jaramillo said that there is no time to wait before they embark on decisive action, as the epidemic could have a deadly impact. fifty-three cases of XDR-TB were identified in KwaZulu Natal recently of which 52 died within 25 days. A case of the disease has also been diagnosed in Gauteng.

XDR-TB is resistant to the two most potent anti-TB drugs. It was also said that HIV has the potential to fast-track XDR-TB into an uncontrollable epidemic. XDR-TB has the potential to spread very rapidly in HIV positive individuals and has a very high mortality rate.

It is of vital importance to ensure that extra caution is taken by Occupational Health staff doing lung function testing. It is a must to change filters with every patient or to use a lung function machine with a one-way valve system.

Staff and other people in the health centre would remain at risk if people are coughing, bearing in mind that a forced expiratory manoeuvre often stimulates coughing. It is therefore most important to rethink infection control in all health facility at our mines.

**8. EXAMINATIONS FOR
CERTIFICATES OF
COMPETENCY: MINE
SURVEYORS AND MINE
MANAGERS: OCTOBER 2006**

Please note that the above mentioned examinations will take place on the dates as indicated below:-

Mine surveyors

12 and 13 October 2006.

Mine Managers

17, 18, 19 and 20 October 2006.

Note: The **venue** for both these examinations will be the **Colliery Training Centre, Watermeyer Street, Witbank**, and **not** the SACE recreation club as in the past.

Yours in health and safety

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**X.MBONAMBI
ACTING PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR
MPUMALANGA REGION**

