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Contact: Amy Louviere  
Phone: 202-693-9423  
Email: [louviere.amy@dol.gov](mailto:louviere.amy@dol.gov)

## **US Labor Department's MSHA releases midyear mine fatality update** *14 miners killed on the job during first half of 2011*

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration today released a midyear summary of mining deaths in the country. As of June 30, eight miners were killed in coal mining operations, and six in the metal and nonmetal sector.

“Even though the number of mining deaths for the first half of this year are at an all-time low, one mining death is still one too many,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

“Fatalities can be prevented,” he added. “They are not an inevitable byproduct of mining. Effective health and safety programs, training of miners and proper workplace examinations can identify and eliminate the hazards that kill and injure miners. Mine operators are well aware they must take responsibility for the health and safety conditions in their mines to prevent these tragedies.”

Of the eight coal mining deaths, three were a result of machinery accidents. Two miners died in rib collapse accidents, two miners were killed in powered haulage accidents and one miner was killed in a fall accident. Two of the eight fatalities involved contractors.

Of the six fatalities in metal and nonmetal mines, two miners died as a result of roof collapses. One miner was killed when he was struck by sliding material, one miner died in a machinery accident, one miner lost his life in a powered haulage accident and another miner was killed in a fall accident. Two of the fatalities involved contractors.

MSHA has taken a number of actions to identify mines with health and safety problems, and has initiated several outreach and enforcement initiatives including “Rules to Live By,” a fatality prevention program spotlighting the safety and health standards most frequently cited during fatal accident investigations.

“We believe those actions, along with initiatives by the mining industry, have resulted in the improved safety record thus far this year,” said Main. “No miners should have to die on the job just to earn a paycheck. MSHA is vigorously enforcing the Mine Act, and constantly looking for ways to improve policies and regulations to prevent these unnecessary tragedies. We want all miners to go home safe and healthy at the end of each shift.”

MSHA is providing mine operators, miners, trainers and others with information on the causes of the mining deaths that occurred during the first half of this year as well as the actions needed to prevent them on MSHA's website at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp>. Additional information on the causes and actions needed to prevent mining deaths is available at <http://www.msha.gov/focuson/rulestoliveby.asp>.

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