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## US Labor Department's MSHA releases mid-year mine fatality update

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration today released a mid-year summary of mining deaths across the country. During the first half of 2013, 18 miners died in work-related accidents at the nation's mines, one less than in the first half of 2012.

Nine each were killed in coal mining and metal and nonmetal mining accidents. Six coal miners died in less than 30 days – four of them in West Virginia – which led to increased actions by MSHA. In both coal and metal and nonmetal mining, one of the miners killed was a contractor.

Among the nine coal mining deaths, two miners died in machinery accidents, three in powered haulage accidents, and two in roof fall accidents. One miner died in an accident resulting from exploding vessels under pressure when he was struck by a hydraulic cylinder on a filter press, and one was killed in a hoisting accident.

In metal and nonmetal mining, one miner died in a fall of highwall, one was killed in a machinery accident, and one miner died in an accident involving explosives and breaking agents. Four miners were killed in powered haulage accidents and two miners in falling material accidents.

“The one recurring element in the fatalities we’ve seen this year is that they were preventable. The final numbers released by MSHA earlier this month showed that 2012 had the lowest mining death and injury rates in the history of U.S. mining,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “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 all miners.”

According to MSHA, fatalities can be prevented by using effective safety and health management programs in the workplace. Workplace examinations for hazards – pre-shift and on-shift every shift – can identify and eliminate hazards that kill and injure miners. Effective and appropriate training better positions miners to recognize and understand hazards and find ways to control or eliminate them. Furthermore, miners must be free to exercise their rights under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 and be full participants in maintaining a safe and healthful workplace.

To review MSHA’s analysis of mining fatalities that occurred during the first half of 2013, along with best practices to help mining operations avoid similar fatalities, go to the agency’s website at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp>. This information also has been provided directly to miners, mine operators and mine safety trainers.

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