



**Fatality #4 - March 20, 2012**  
**Fall of Face/Rib/Highwall - Montana - Gemstones**  
**Mike Roberts - Vortex Mine**

**METAL/NONMETAL MINE FATALITY** - On March 20, 2012, a 54 year-old mine owner with approximately 25 years of experience was killed at an underground gemstone mine. He was cleaning fine ore with a shovel and loading it in the bucket of a front-end loader when rock fell from the top left rib about 20 feet high. The victim was working alone.



**Best Practices**

- Examine work areas and identify and control all hazards before starting any work.
- Establish safe work procedures and train all persons to recognize and understand these procedures.
- Always examine, sound, and test for loose ground in areas before starting to work, after blasting, and as ground conditions warrant.
- Test for loose material frequently during work activities and where necessary, scale loose material safely.
- Install ground support in roof and ribs where conditions warrant.
- Do not perform work alone in any area where hazardous conditions exist that would endanger your safety.

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> fatality reported in calendar year 2012 in the metal and nonmetal mining industries. As of this date in 2011, there were 3 fatalities reported in these industries. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fall of Face/Rib/Highwall fatality in 2012. There were no Fall of Face/Rib/Highwall fatalities in the same period in 2011.

---

The information provided in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.

---