



OCT 02 2015

To: Metal and Nonmetal Stakeholders  
*Neal H. Merrifield*  
From: Neal H. Merrifield, Administrator for  
Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health  
Mine Safety and Health Administration  
Re: Seasonal Safety Alert

Historically, October has been the most deadly month for the metal and nonmetal mining industry, with 51 fatalities occurring in the month of October since 2000. During this fall period MSHA intends to continue enhanced enforcement, education and outreach with a special emphasis on the historically high number of mining deaths.

Particular attention will be paid to intermittent mines that are beginning to shut down and prepare for the winter season, and the many full time operations that are performing annual repairs in advance of inclement weather. During these activities, many miners may be performing new or unfamiliar tasks, or may be assisting maintenance personnel on jobs they rarely perform, using unfamiliar tools and equipment. Mine operators must assure miners are adequately trained to do those tasks and are protected from hazards.

MSHA's increased vigilance during this period of historically higher deaths will focus additional resources on increased enforcement attention, education and outreach, including walk-and-talks. We are encouraging the mining industry to do the same. MSHA has provided the mining industry with information on mining deaths and best practices to prevent them, particularly since the fall of 2013 when mining deaths increased. Please help MSHA get that information distributed. The Agency will be looking hard for the conditions identified that led to those deaths. MNM inspectors, joined by Coal inspectors and Educational Field and Small Mines Services personnel will be visiting mines, calling attention to potentially hazardous tasks and conditions and discussing safe work practices with miners. Please join MSHA in this special safety outreach and help us spread the word to the mines and miners in your industry sectors. This is the time to be proactive. Encourage mine operators to assure that workplace examinations are being conducted to identify and fix hazards, and that miners are properly trained, including task training to recognize and avoid hazards so they can go home safe and healthy at the end of each shift.

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!

A link follows to a Seasonal Safety Alert recently published on MSHA's website.  
<http://www.msha.gov/alerts/seasonal-safety-alert-0923.pdf>. For more information on the mining deaths that have occurred and best practices to prevent them, please go to <http://www.msha.gov/alerts/seasonal-safety-alert.pptx>. Please use the photos and descriptions to prompt discussions about fatalities and how to prevent them.