



To the Mining Community:

While much of the public's attention was focused in 2010 on the tragedy at Upper Big Branch Mine that killed 29 miners, that disaster was not the only cause of mining deaths in this country in 2010. In total, 71 miners died on the job last year, compared to 34 in 2009. Forty-eight of those deaths occurred in coal mines: 29 coal miners were killed in the explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine in April and 19 additional coal miners lost their lives in other accidents. Twenty-three miners were killed at metal and nonmetal mining operations - 45 percent were contractors. Not including the Upper Big Branch-related deaths, it appears that more than half of the 42 additional miners died in accidents involving violations of the Rules to Live By standards. In a look back over the past 10 years and excluding Upper Big Branch, these same types of fatal accidents have occurred. We must take the lessons to be learned by these fatal accidents and act on them to prevent additional fatalities.

MSHA has summary information on its website www.msha.gov identifying causes of these mining fatalities for 2010, best practices to prevent them, posters for you to print and display in your operations, and other information on preventing fatalities in mining workplaces. Agency Fatal Investigation reports, when completed on each fatality, are available at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/fab.htm>.

Fatalities are not inevitable. They can be prevented by using effective **safety and health management programs** in your workplaces. **Workplace examinations** for hazards – pre-shift and on-shift every shift – can identify and eliminate hazards that kill and injure miners. And providing effective and appropriate **training** will help ensure that miners better recognize and understand hazards and how to control or eliminate them. Mine operators and Part 46 and Part 48 trainers need to train miners and mine supervisors on the conditions that lead to deaths and injuries and measures to prevent and avoid them.

Mining workplaces must be made safe for miners, and operators must ensure that health and safety measures are in place to protect them. Thousands of mines do that and work year in and year out without fatalities or reporting lost-time injuries.

If you have any questions or want more information on how to prevent fatalities, injuries and illnesses in mining workplaces, visit MSHA's website at www.msha.gov or call your local MSHA office.

Working together, we can improve mine safety and health in our nation's mines and send every miner home safe and healthy to friends and family after every shift, every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Main". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joseph A. Main
Assistant Secretary of Labor for
Mine Safety and Health