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Contact: Amy Louviere

Phone: 202-693-9423

Email: louviere.amy@dol.gov

MSHA issues mine fatality data for the first quarter of 2014

Agency calls stakeholder summit to address recent spike in metal, nonmetal mining deaths

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today released a summary of U.S. mining deaths that occurred during the first quarter of 2014. From Jan. 1 to March 31, eight miners died in accidents in the U.S. mining industry. Three were killed in coal mining accidents and five in metal and nonmetal mining accidents. The previous quarter was marked by 15 deaths and an increase in the metal and nonmetal sector.

“We have seen a spike in deaths in the second quarter of 2014 as well, primarily in metal and nonmetal mining, which has experienced 19 fatalities since last October,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “MSHA takes this increase very seriously, and has called a summit of the key metal and nonmetal stakeholders to identify the problem and take actions to reverse it.”

During the first quarter of 2014 in metal and nonmetal mining, two miners were killed by falling/sliding materials: A 50-year-old supervisor died at a sand and gravel mine when an 80-foot-high embankment failed and engulfed him, and a 64-year-old foreman when struck by a section of pipe. The third victim, a 34-year-old contract laborer, died after stepping into an open elevator shaft from the fourth floor landing. The fourth victim was killed in a powered haulage accident, when the 56-year-old belt operator at an iron ore mine became entangled in a belt conveyor. The fifth victim, a 27-year-old contractor mechanic, was repairing a hydraulic pump at a crushed limestone operation when he fell from a walkway and hit his head on the ground.

In coal mining, two miners were killed in machinery accidents: A 24-year-old continuous mining machine operator died after he was pinned between machinery and the coal rib; and a 41-year-old mechanic trainee died while working on a belt conveyor feeder, when he was pinned between the crawler track and the frame of the feeder. The third coal mining victim, a 20-year-old laborer, died in a powered haulage accident when he was struck by a feeder.

During a special summit with stakeholders today, MSHA provided more detailed information on the 19 deaths at metal and nonmetal mines since 2013. The deaths have occurred at crushed stone, sand and gravel, silver, cement, lime, gold, granite, clay and iron ore mining operations in 12 states across the country. Six deaths occurred at underground mines and 13 at surface mines.

“Mine operators need to reevaluate the quality of the training miners are receiving and their examinations of miners’ work places because they appear to be lacking,” said Main. “MSHA will be paying close attention to these deficiencies, as well as the types of hazards and conditions that have led to these deaths, during mine inspections.”

Details on the mining deaths presented at the summit can be found at the following links:

<http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/2014/q1/PPT.pdf>
<http://www.msha.gov/Fatals/Summaries/2014/Q1/Coal.pdf>
<http://www.msha.gov/Fatals/Summaries/2014/Q1/MNM.pdf>

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