

NEDLAC ANNUAL SUMMIT

RESPONDING TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CHALLENGES IN
THE MINES

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National Economic
Development and
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Background

Workers were previously forced to work under very bad safety conditions.

- No proper investigation of injuries and diseases

Told to work & report after shift if they have concerns about safety.

- Workers were dismissed for getting injured

Many could not come back to report because they died.

Major Disasters

- Coalbrook disaster 21/01/1960-434 died.(Rock burst)
- Hlobane disasters 1944, 12/09/1983- 64 died. (Methane)
- Kinross disaster 16/09/1986- 177 died. (Gas Explosion)
- Vaal Reefs Disaster 104 workers killed. (Trimming)

Progress- legislative framework



Mine Health and Safety Act

- Right to refuse to do dangerous work (S23)- MHSA.
- Right to information.
- Right to Education and training- MQA established.
- Right to representation and participation.

Current key challenges on health and safety in the mines

- High number of mine injuries & fatalities. (About 49 in 2023)
- High cases of occupational disease. (Hearing loss, TB)
- Zama-zamas & illegal mining

SAMRASS: Fatalities and injuries per commodity/region: Weekly report 2023

(Provisional statistics)

Commodity	Fatalities*						Injuries*		
	Actual						Actual		
	01/01/2022 - 31/08/2022	01/01/2023 - 31/08/2023	% change	Total fatal accidents** 2022	Total fatal accidents** 2023	% change	01/01/2022 - 31/08/2022	01/01/2023 - 31/08/2023	% change
Total	33	31	-6	30	25	-17	1374	1366	-1
Gold	12	16	33	9	12	33	365	447	22
Coal	5	4	-20	5	3	-40	131	129	-2
Platinum	11	6	-45	10	6	-40	695	627	-10
Other	5	5	0	6	4	-33	183	163	-11

* Provisional figures

Region	Fatalities*						Injuries*		
	Actual						Actual		
	01/01/2022 - 31/08/2022	01/01/2023 - 31/08/2023	% change	Total fatal accidents	Total fatal accidents	% change	01/01/2022 - 31/08/2022	01/01/2023 - 31/08/2023	% Change
Total	33	31	-6	30	25	-17	1374	1366	-1
Western Cape	1	2	100	1	1	0	8	4	-50
Northern Cape	1	2	100	1	2	100	62	43	-31
Free State	2	1	-50	2	1	-50	104	118	13
Eastern Cape	0	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	#DIV/0!	2	2	0
KwaZulu/Natal	1	0	-100	1	0	-100	15	2	-87
Mpumalanga	4	6	50	4	5	25	146	158	8
Limpopo	2	1	-50	2	1	-50	94	111	18
Gauteng	8	14	75	5	10	100	190	262	38
Klerksdorp	2	1	-50	2	1	-50	83	70	-16
Rustenburg	12	4	-67	12	4	-67	670	596	-11

* Provisional figures

** Number of accidents in which persons died, catering for multiple fatalities.

Interventions

- Recognition of worker's rights (S23 – MHSA)
- Joint interventions in the tri-partite forums.
- Visible leadership in fatal accident scene.
- Capacity building and training
- Annual release of H&S performance of industry.
- PPE suitable for women.
- Zero harm targets 2003-2013 & no more fatalities by 2024.
- MineSafe National Conferences a platform to share best practice.

Proposals and lessons learnt

- Ongoing promotion and awareness in relation to occupational health and safety.
- Turn the challenges into programme of action.
- Transparency is key!
- Follow cases of injured workers till pay-out of compensation.
- Intensified Visible Felt Leadership
- Ongoing collaboration - Tripartite engagements (Government (DMRE), Organised Labour and Business)

*“If you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far go together!”
African Proverb*

