Deaths in Metal / Non-Metal Mining
Extracts by Martin Isles, MPA/UEPG, April 2015

MSHA, the Mine Health & Safety Administration, is the industry-specific Regulator within the U.S. Department of Labor. The ‘Alliance’ comprises MSHA and the NSSGA, the construction aggregates trade association.

These 2 pages are extracts from information placed in the public domain by MSHA.
Recommendation for Fatality Summaries

The six fatality extracts (as shown) comprise useful summaries of the immediate causes. In the US, the term “Mine” covers both surface & underground.

In the 16 months from October 2013 to January 2015, 37 fatalities were recorded by MSHA (excl. Coal). These were categorised as below:

- 10 Underground; 27 Surface
- 10 Contractors; 27 Mine Employees
- 9 Powered Haulage
- 7 Falling/Sliding Material
- 5 Fall of Person
- 4 Machinery
- 3 Explosives
- 2 Fall of Rib
- 2 Electrical
- 2 Hoisting
- 1 Fall of Roof
- 1 Other (Drowning)
- 1 Explosion of Gas

NSSGA has amassed some key points about Best Practices for Avoiding Fatalities. They are shared below:

Provide new miner, refresher and task training so that miners recognize all potential hazardous conditions, and understand safe job procedures so that hazards can be eliminated before work is begun.

- Examine work areas to identify all possible hazards and eliminate them before beginning work.
- Before starting work, make sure that machinery power is off, locked, and tagged; similarly, make sure that machinery components are blocked against motion.
- Conduct pre-operational checks on equipment in order to identify any defects that may affect the safe operations.
- Provide timely and quality maintenance on mobile equipment.
- Assure that miners always wear a seat belt when operating mobile equipment.
- Assure that, where miners face a danger of falling, they wear fall protection.
- Provide and maintain guarding sufficient to prevent contact with moving machine parts
- Ensure that all active working areas are ventilated prior to allowing miners to work there.
- In blasting, assure that all persons are cleared and removed from blast area unless suitable blasting shelters are provided to protect persons from fly-rock.

With several fatalities having occurred after off-highway plant had breached inadequate edge protection, I would add:

- Ensure all berms are a minimum of 1.5 m or the radius of the largest wheel/tyre – whichever is greater.

The full Alliance presentation is online at: