

MEDIA STATEMENT

The Minerals Council South Africa hosts the fourth Fall-of-Ground Day of Learning to eliminate fatalities caused by a key risk in mining

Johannesburg, 28 March 2025. The Minerals Council South Africa hosted its fourth Fall-of-Ground Action Plan Day of Learning as part of its concerted efforts to eliminate fatalities in the mining industry.

In 2024, the industry reported a record low 42 fatalities, a 24% reduction from 55 in the previous year, and a reduction in injuries to 1,841 people, a 16% reduction from 2023. The performance is confirmation that the industry is firmly on the path to Zero Harm when every employee returns home safely and in good health.

The Day of Learning, attended by more than 300 industry stakeholders, heard from mining companies implementing leading practices and technologies to make underground mining safer by striving to eliminate fatalities and injuries arising from falls of ground, which happen when rocks fall from the roofs or walls of tunnels and working areas.

“This annual gathering plays a critical role in our ongoing efforts to eliminate fall-of-ground (FOG) fatalities in our industry,” says Mzila Mthenjane, Minerals Council CEO.

Falls of ground remain the highest risk of all underground mines and management of these incidents remains a critical factor in achieving Zero Harm.

“Today is about bringing to bear the leadership humility to share our experiences and to learn from each other, the outcome of which will be a strengthening of our collective commitment to making our operations safer and better places to work,” Mr Mthenjane says.

Please [click here](#) to explore all the presentations and videos from the event.

The Minerals Council is encouraged that its collaboration, interventions and initiatives agreed with its members are resulting in significant step changes towards Zero Harm.

The mining industry has reduced fatalities in three decades by 91% to 42 from 484 in 1994. Injuries have fallen by 78% from 8,347 thirty years ago.

A key initiative was the establishment in 2003 of the Minerals Council’s Mining Industry Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) Learning Hub to focus on the adoption of leading health and safety practices to accelerate progress towards achieving Zero Harm. The practices included falls of ground, transport and machinery, dust and noise reduction.



From accounting for 302 fatalities in 1993, the mining industry reduced fatalities resulting from falls of ground to a record low of six in 2022. There has been a regression since then but still well below the levels up to 2022. In 2024, there were 13 fall-of-ground related fatalities compared to 15 the year before.

The key interventions behind the 96% reduction in FOG-related fatalities over the past 31 years include:

- The implementation since 2009 of entry examinations and actively making working areas safe daily.
- Netting and bolting of tunnel roofs and walls were introduced in 2012.
- Since 2016 there were annual initiatives to address rock bursts and gravity-induced falls of ground.
- Technology has proved successful in significantly reducing human exposure to rock bursts.

In 2021, the Minerals Council's CEO Zero Harm Forum mandated the Rock Engineering Technical Committee (RETC) of the Minerals Council, with the support of the South African National Institute of Rock Engineering (SANIRE), to develop the Action Plan to eliminate FOG fatalities.

The Minerals Council is implementing the FOG Action Plan project in partnership with mining professional associations including Association of Mine Managers of South Africa (AMMSA), South African Collieries Managers (SACMA), SANIRE, organised labour, the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, suppliers, research institutions and universities.

The FOG Action Plan consists of the following six pillars: Adoption of leading practices, research and development, skills development, policy issues, achieving zero harm production, and the implementation and monitoring of leading practices.

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