

MEDIA STATEMENT

The Minerals Council South Africa reviews fall-of-ground interventions to continue the mining sector's downward trajectory in safety incidents after a record year 2025

Cape Town, 10 February 2026. The Minerals Council South Africa will renew its focus on key safety interventions, particularly on eliminating falls-of-ground incidents, which have increased in the past year despite the record low number of fatalities of 41 in 2025.

The Minerals Council notes that the mining industry closed the year on 41 known fatalities. This is an all-time low and compares to the previous year's 42 fatalities.

"While we note that this was the second successive year of the lowest number of fatalities in our sector, we acknowledge that 41 families have lost their loved ones, as have friends and colleagues. We extend our heartfelt condolences to them," says Japie Fullard, Chair of the Minerals Council CEO Zero Harm Forum.

"As mining CEOs, we believe that Zero Harm is possible. If you consider the significant reduction in fatalities, injuries and illnesses in the sector over the past three decades you will understand why we hold this belief. In the coal industry, there were eight months up to end-August 2025 without a fatality," Mr Fullard says at the Investing in African Mining Indaba 2026.

The number of fatalities in 2025 is marginally down compared to 2024, but when considering the 12% reduction in serious injuries to 1,693 from 1,925 in the same period, the Minerals Council is encouraged that safety interventions and programmes are working and delivering the outcomes the sector expects to see as it strives for Zero Harm.

The mining industry has reduced fatalities in three decades by 91% to 41 in 2025 from 484 in 1994. Serious injuries have fallen by 80% to 1,693 from 8,347 in that period, with specific sector focus on leading causes of fatalities like falls of ground as well as transportation and mining contributing to the reduction. Increased attention at CEO level to lead safety and health initiatives and the sector's adoption of leading practices have contributed to the significant step changes safety.

However, there was a worrying 25% regression in fatalities related to falls of ground, which increased to 15 deaths in 2025 from 12 the year before. The Minerals Council has its CEO-approved Fall-of-Ground Action Plan, which has contributed to the record low number of 6



fatalities from falls of ground in 2022. The plan works, but the Minerals Council will work with its members to understand why there has been a setback.

The number of FOG fatalities fell by 78% to an average of 24 a year in the 2016-2020 five-year period from an average of 111 a year in 2001-2005.

The key interventions were the implementation of entry examinations and actively making working areas safe daily since 2009. In 2012, netting and bolting of tunnel roofs and walls were introduced and the use of steel nets has become a common feature in South Africa's deep-level mines.

The Minerals Council's most important partnership is with the Mines Inspectorate in the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources and organised labour as we strive to achieve Zero Harm at South Africa's mines. This is the partnership most highly valued by the Minerals Council because of the significant interventions the sector has made in fatalities, injuries, and occupational diseases to return all employees home in safely after every shift.

At the Minerals Council, member CEOs meet on the first working day of each month to share their learnings about safety incidents, the root causes and the actions they have implemented to ensure these incidents are not repeated again.

"It's only through sharing like this that we grow our knowledge base and not repeat the mistakes that have hurt or killed our colleagues. It is a very powerful platform and I'm encouraged by the seriousness with which these sessions are treated and the level of engagement we have. I have no doubt this a major contributor towards the advances we are making in health and safety in our sector," says Mr Fullard.

In the past 15 years, TB and silicosis cases have reduced by more than 80%, with the incidence of TB cases falling to 220 per 100,000 employees, which is half the national average for South Africa. Cases of noise-induced hearing loss in mining have reduced by 55% in the past 15 years and is now coming under particular focus in the Minerals Council.

The total number of occupational diseases reported by the mines decreased by 7.6% from 1,864 in 2023 to 1,723 in 2024, according to data from the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. The mining sector employs about 470,000 people to put that number into context.

During 2026, the Minerals Council's focus will be on sustaining and strengthening the downward trajectory in health and safety incidents through deeper embedding of critical control management, broader adoption of leading practices, enhanced learning and knowledge sharing, stronger visible-felt leadership, and continued industry collaboration

through both the Minerals Council structures and the tripartite Mine Health and Safety Council.

Please click [here](#) for Mr Japie Fullard's Speech

Please click [here](#) for Dr Thuthula Balfour's Presentation

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