

MONTHLY Newsletter

Analysis of accidents reported during May 2008

The total number of accidents reported during the month of May 2008 were 266 accidents reported in which 14 were fatalities and 263 injuries.

The gold sector remains to be the main contributor to mining related deaths.

The performances of different sectors of mining with respect to the number of fatalities and the number of injuries reported in May 2008 are listed below:

• **Gold sector**

A total of 11 fatalities and 165 injuries were reported.

• **Platinum sector**

One fatality and 59 injuries were reported.

• **Coal sector**

There were no fatalities and 22

injuries reported.

• **Other sector**

There were two fatalities and 17 injuries reported.

The safety performance during May 2008 by classification:

• **Fall of ground (FOG)**

There were three fatalities and 72 injuries reported.

• **Machinery**

One fatality and 12 injuries was reported.

• **Transportation and mining**

Transportation and mining caused ten fatalities and 55 injuries were reported.

• **General**

There were 117 injuries reported.

There were no other fatalities reported caused by explosives, heat sickness, miscellaneous and general accidents in May 2008

The general category refers to fatalities caused by accidents as a result of slipping and falling, fall of material/rolling rock, manual handling of material and mineral, falling in or from burning and scalding and death as result of exposure to dust, gas and fumes. The regional performance during May 2008 are as follows:

• **Gauteng region**

There were 11 fatalities and 63 injuries reported in this region.

• **North-West region**

One fatality and 105 injuries were reported.

• **Free State region**

There were no fatalities and 57 injuries reported in this region.

• **Mpumalanga region**

There were no fatalities and 35 injuries were reported during this period

• **Northern Cape region**

There was one fatality and two injuries in this region.

• **Western Cape region**

One fatality and four injuries were reported.

The statistics received suggests that there were no accidents, injuries nor fatalities in the Northern (Limpopo), Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal regions.

Continue on page 2

Inside this issue:

Medical appeals	2
Government Certificates of Competency	2-3
Inert gasses and purging	4
Examination dates	4

New explosives regulations

The manufacturing of explosives at mines should be done in terms of Chapter 4 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act No 29 of 1996).

Therefore it should be:

- Carried out in accordance with a prepared written procedure;
- Implemented for the purpose of manufacturing ex-

- plosives; and
- Carried out after consultation with the explosive manufacturer or supplier.

This is a new concept in underground mining operations. Employers must ensure that they are conversant with the conditions prescribed by the Department of Labour as well as the Chief Inspector of Explosives. The

manufacturing units are licensed and de-licensed by the two Departments mentioned above.

There is currently a working group consisting of all the relevant Government departments, major explosives manufactures and the mining industry of South Africa. The working group is

Continue on page 4

Appeal in terms of section 20 of the MHSA, 1996

Section 20 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act No 29 of 1996) states that:

"An employee may appeal to the Medical Inspector against:

- a) a decision that the employee is unfit to perform any particular category of work; or*
- b) any finding of an occupational medical practitioner contained in an exit certificate prepared in terms of section 17."*

An appeal should be lodged with the Medical Inspector of the Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate (MHSI) within 30 days of the decision of unfitness. The employee lodging an appeal should provide the following information:

- clear reasons why an employee is appealing
- address and contact details of the employer
- address and contact details of the employee
- address and contact details of the legal or union representative
- relevant medical records from the mine
- occupation of the employee and duration of employment.

After submission to the Department of Minerals and Energy, the appeal will be registered and filed with the necessary reference number.

The office of the Medical Inspector ensures that all appeals are attended to as soon as possible. If necessary, the Medical Inspector will then, according to the condition of the employee, refer the employee to a relevant medical specialist for an independent examination, evaluation and second opinion.

After the medical report has been received from the identified specialist, it will be scrutinized by the Medical Inspector and a decision will then be made. The employee will then be notified of the final decision.

For more information contact:

Medical Inspector
Tel: (012) 317 8454 or 8459
dipalesa.mokoboto@dme.gov.za
OR
Technical Advisor:
Occupational Medicine
Tel: (012) 317 8437
amori.vdmerwe@dme.gov.za

THE APPEAL SYSTEM DOES NOT ADDRESS:

- Compensation matters; or
- Benefits and payments of mines.

FOR COMPENSATION MATTERS, CONTACT:

- **The Compensation Commissioner**
MBOD
 144 De Korte Street
 BRAAMFONTEIN
 2001
 Tel: 011-403 6322
- **Rand Mutual Insurance**
 PO BOX 61413
 MARSHALLTOWN
 2107

Government Certificates of Competency

The Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) through the Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate (MHSI) conducts examinations for the Government Certificates of Competency (GCC) required in the mining sector.

Certificates of Competency are required for certain categories of occupations in the organizational structure of any organization whose activities are regulated in terms of the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996. They play a major role in the promotion of health and safety for the mining sector.

The following examinations for Certificates of Competency are administered at Head Office in Pretoria, by the Support Services Unit:

- Locomotive Engine Drivers Certificate of Competency (LEDCC);

- Mine Engineers Certificate of Competency (MECC);
- Mine Managers Certificate of Competency (MMCC);
- Mine Overseers Certificate of Competency (MOCC);
- Mine Surveyors Certificate of Competency (MSCC); and
- Winding Engine Drivers Certificate of Competency (WEDCC).

Blasting, Onsetters and Lampman Certificates of Competency are administered at Regional Offices of DME.

The Chief Inspector of Mines (CIOM) appoints in writing members of Commission of Examiners (commonly referred to as the 'Commission'). The Commission must report regularly the Commission proceedings to the CIOM in accordance with Regulation 28.3. Members are drawn from

Continue on page 3

Analysis of accidents reported during May 2008

From page 1

The multiple fatal that occurred in the Gauteng region on the 1 May 2008, where nine persons were fatally injured, was a shock to the industry. This accident occurred when a rope broke and these

persons fell to their death. This accident draws the attention of the industry to the responsibilities of all persons that are involved in the safe design, operation, maintenance and use of equipment for the raising and lowering of mine workers.

Government Certificates of Competency

From page 2

the State and mining industry under the leadership of a DME official appointed as Chairperson for each Commission of Certificate of Competency. Members from the mining industry are nominated by the Mine Professional Associations (MPASS) to serve on the Commission of Examiners.

The mandate of the Commission of Examiners is to;

- Set and moderate question papers for quality and fairness of mark allocation;
- Marking and moderation of answer sheets;
- Attend to cases of appeals for remarks; and
- Moderate and approve allocation of marks.

The Commission submit a list of candidates who have successfully met all the requirements for a particular Certificate of Competency for the CIOM to sign and award them with certificates in terms of Regulation 28.1.1

Applications for acceptance as a candidate made through an appropriate application form are submitted to the Commission through the Secretary of each Commission in the DME. These applications for a particular category of Certificate of Competency are considered by the Chairperson of the Commission of Examiners or a person delegated by the Chief Inspector of Mines. The person delegated by the CIOM who is a DME official is com-

monly referred to as a 'Designated Officer'.

There are a number of requirements that must be met by a person applying to be accepted as a candidate. A candidate must also apply to write an examination for the relevant Certificate of Competency. No person shall submit an application for examination unless and until s/he has been accepted as a candidate. A

letter of acceptance to sit for an examination indicating the venue where an examination will be conducted in a Region of choice by the candidate plus timetable are issued to candidates on acceptance for examination. The requirements for acceptance as a candidate will be discussed at length in the next edition.

Examinations of each

Certificate of Competency are held nationally at various examination centres in Regional Offices and/or Head Office. Examination dates varies throughout the year depending on the frequency of the examination of a Certificate of Competency and number of candidates accepted. Examinations are conducted either orally or in writing by examiners who are members of

that particular Commission of Examiners.

Results are made available in writing to a candidate who has sat for an examination or through the DME internet. Candidates who are not satisfied with the outcome of their results have a right to apply for a remark to the Chairperson of the Commission of Examiners.

Type of Certificate	Applications must be submitted to.	Frequency*	Applicable Regions	Location of Examination	Type of Examination
Blasting	DME Regional Offices	Normally twice per month*	All	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Oral
Lampsman	DME Regional Offices	Monthly	All	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Oral
Locomotive Engine Drivers	DME Head Office	Twice per month	Pretoria	Head Office	Oral
Mine Engineers	DME Head Office	Twice per annum (June and November)	All	Colleges of Education across the country	Written
Mine Managers	Head Office	Twice per annum (May and October)	All	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Written
Mine Overseers	DME Head and part Regional Offices	Normally twice per month*	All except Eastern and Western Cape	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Oral
Mine Surveyors	DME Head Office	Twice per annum (April and October)	All	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Written
Onsetters	DME Regional Offices	Twice per month	All	Examination centres in Regional Offices	Oral
Winding Engine Drivers	DME Head Office	Twice per month	Pretoria	Head Office	Oral

N.B.:* Depends on demand and Inspectorate capacity in the area and this ranges from weekly in the busy regions like North West to quarterly in Regions like Eastern Cape.

Diarize the following:

August 2008

- 1: Submission of remarks by moderators for Mine Surveyors
- 1: Closing date for the remark of Mine Engineers examinations
- 8: Closing date for applications of acceptance for October examinations for Mine Surveyors
- 8: Submission of remarks by moderators for Mine Managers
- 8: Closing date for submission of draft examination papers by examiners for October 2008 examinations for Mine Managers
- 14-15: Public Hearing on the MHS Amendment Bill
- 15: Closing date for applications of acceptance for October 2008 examinations for Mine Managers
- 22: Closing date for applications of acceptance for November examinations for Mine Engineers
- 26: Commission meeting for final moderation and acceptance for October 2008 examinations papers for Mine Managers
- 29: Closing date for October 2008 examinations for Mine Surveyors
- 29: Commission meeting for Mine Engineers

September 2008

- 5: Closing date of acceptance for October 2008 examinations for Mine Managers
- 5: Commission meeting for final moderation and acceptance for October 2008 examination papers for Mine Surveyors
- 5: Mine Health and Safety Summit
- 8-12: Mining Week
- 19: Closing date for enrolment of Engineers with the Department of Education

New explosives regulations

From page 1

responsible for the compilation of a best practice guideline regarding the full cycle of the manufacturing of explosives underground until the destruction or desensitisation of this explosives mixture. Although the best practice guideline will be available in due

course, employers must not hesitate to contact their explosives manufacturer/supplier to determine the conditions of the licensing of the manufacturing units and procedures from manufacturing in regard to the destruction/desensitising of explosives/waste materials.

Inert gasses and purging

Following a recent accident at a mine where a boilermaker used an open flame to cut into a container without knowing what it used to contain, the question was asked what an inert gas is and what purging would be required. An inert gas can also be called a noble gas and could be any of the gaseous elements of the helium group on the periodic table.

A couple of examples are Argon (atomic number 18) which is colourless and odourless, inert and comprises about 1% of the earth's atmosphere. Then there is Helium (atomic number 2) being a very light colourless inert gas, very difficult to liquefy and is found in certain naturally found gas sources in Texas and Kansas in the United States of America (USA).

Next is Krypton (atomic number 36) also colourless, inert and is found only as a trace element in the atmosphere. Then neon (atomic number 10) being colourless, inert and gives a reddish glow in a vacuum tube. Neon occurs in small amounts in the air.

Radon (atomic number 86) is a radioactive gaseous element created during the decay of radium and is the heaviest of the inert gasses. It occurs naturally and in particular over areas of granite. Hazardous to health. Then lastly there is xenon (atomic number 54) being colourless and odourless, inert and

occurs in the earth's atmosphere in trace amounts. These noble/inert gasses are however seldom used to purge containers/tanks except in very specialised circumstances.

An easier and practical way to purge a tank or vessel is to use water if that tank or vessel is considered to be small enough to make this option practicable.

However, there are two other gasses commonly used to purge tanks and also termed "inert" gasses although not noble. These two gasses are nitrogen and carbon dioxide. The use of these two gases would be to reduce the oxygen level to a concentration referred to as the "limiting oxygen concentration" (LOC).

This method entails careful measurement in order to keep this level at between 2-4% below the LOC.

To summarise, it is good practice to have a procedure in place, drawn up by the manager in consultation with the Occupational Hygienist. Prior to the actual procedure being executed the Occupational Hygienist should do a risk assessment in order to determine the type of residual gas/chemical present, whether it is potentially explosive or poisonous and thus recommend the correct method to be used to safeguard the boilermaker from an accidental ignition or exposure with detrimental health consequences.

CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE MINE HEALTH AND SAFETY INSPECTORATE AND PUBLISHED BY:
SUPPORT SERVICES UNIT

Victoria Mathibeli (Director)
Tel: +27(0)12-3178462
E-mail: victoria.mathibeli@dme.gov.za

Monja Erasmus
Tel: +27(0)12-3178103
E-mail: monja.erasmus@dme.gov.za

Renée Joubert
Tel: +27(0)12-3178510
E-mail: rene.joubert@dme.gov.za

Pride Shongwe
Tel: +27(0)12-3178326
E-mail: pride.Shongwe@dme.gov.za

COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Siyabonga Kheswa
Tel: +27(0)12-3178518
E-mail: siyabonga.kheswa@dme.gov.za