



Anglo American Platinum - Tumela mine

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN MINING

POSITION PAPER

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Between 1993 and 2019, the industry experienced a 92% overall decline in the number of fatalities.



INTRODUCTION

Mining is a complex, technical and often labour-intensive industry. Risks and hazards are prevalent in the extraction of many commodities and have the potential to cause harm and, in extreme cases, to threaten lives.

Of the men and women who work in the sector every day, mining requires rigorous training, absolute vigilance, and unfailing adherence to health and safety standards and procedures.

The South African mining industry employs approximately half a million people, each of whom, it is estimated, supports between five and 10 people. The loss of one life therefore carries with it an economic impact that can be felt as much as tenfold, and causes grief among the departed's loved ones that can neither be tallied nor consoled.

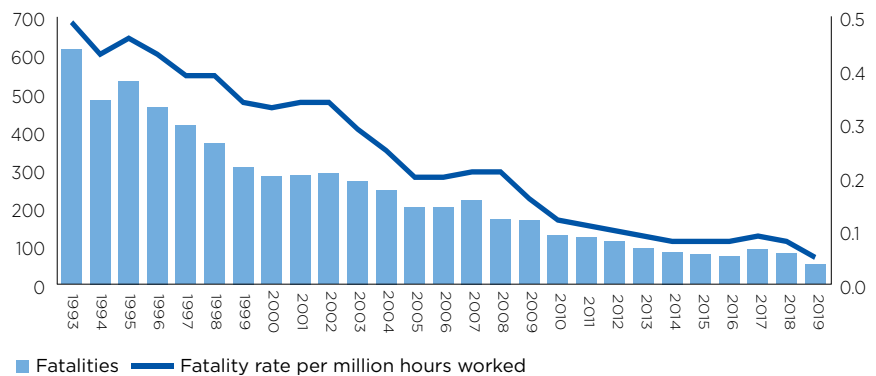
Efforts to reduce miners' exposure to risks and hazards, to prevent and treat a number of occupational diseases, and above all to eliminate fatalities, must be an abiding priority for South Africa's mining industry. The Minerals Council, in its role to unite and represent mining and exploration companies operating in South Africa, is committed to the aspiration of zero harm. In everything it does, it aims to ensure that every mine employee returns from work unharmed at the end of every day. It sets out to achieve this by working closely with its members, as well as its tripartite partners of government and organised labour, whose input and support is invaluable.



Developments since democracy

Since the advent of democracy, the health and safety efforts of the mining industry and its partners have paid off in dramatic and literally life-saving ways. Between 1993 and 2019, the industry experienced a 92% overall decline in the number of fatalities, and a 93% decline in fatalities that occurred as a result of fall of ground.

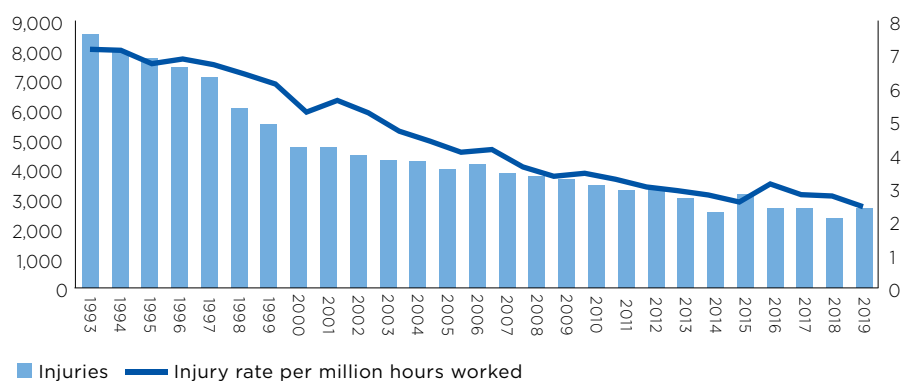
Fatalities and fatality frequency rate



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy

Injuries similarly declined from an injury rate of 7.14 per million hours in 1993 to 2.68 per million hours in 2019, an improvement of 66%.

Industry injuries and injury frequency rates



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy

In terms of health, the total number of reported occupational diseases declined by 66% between 2008 and 2019 and 23% between 2017 and 2018.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

These figures were the collective result of numerous programmes, initiatives and collaborative bodies that were established with the aspiration of zero harm in mind.

They included:

The Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA)

- Drawn up in 1996, the MHSA is responsible for the overall regulation and safeguarding of the health and safety of mine employees, as well as residents of areas affected by mining operations. Typically, every operation in the industry has its own health and safety committee that comprises representatives of management and unions seeking to ensure compliance with regulations, to provide safety training for all employees, and to promote active collaboration in all matters relating to safety and health.

The Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC)

- Established in 1996, the MHSC was set up to advise the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy on health and safety in the mining industry, and to respond to industry health and safety challenges. Its primary tasks are to advise the Minister on occupational health and safety legislation, to research outcomes focused on improving and promoting occupational health and safety in South African mines, and to promote a culture of transformation. The MHSC comprises representatives of various government departments and institutions, organised labour and the industry.

Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA)

- The MQA plays a critical role in addressing skills shortages in the mining industry through capacity development and process improvement. It is mandated to ensure that the mining industry has a sufficient number of competent people who have been trained to undertake healthy and safe production.

Mining Industry Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) Learning Hub

- The Minerals Council established the MOSH Learning Hub in 2008 to help companies learn from pockets of excellence in the industry. Through the MOSH system, which is the largest programme initiated by the Minerals Council in the past decade, companies and individual operations have adopted leading practices to reduce health and safety risks.



■ Sibanye-Stillwater – SA gold operations

The CEO Zero Harm Forum

Another body established by the Minerals Council is the CEO Zero Harm Forum (formerly the CEO Elimination of Fatalities Team), which came into being in 2012. The CEO Zero Harm Forum is premised on the belief that the industry's CEOs need to lead by example, to drive health and safety initiatives in the industry, and to address key challenges in order to accelerate the industry's journey to zero harm.

The forum's objectives include:

- Developing a model for industry leadership at CEO level
- Modelling leadership behaviour to demonstrate commitment and expectations
- Sharing experiences and helping each other manage key challenges
- Establishing working protocols with industry stakeholders and communities
- Monitoring and agreeing on adjustments to industry models for specific needs

One of the forum's key focus areas is fall of ground, which remains the largest cause of fatalities in the industry. Other areas of priority include transport and machinery, dust, noise, tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS, and health and safety culture transformation. In order to address these issues, the forum has been behind numerous health and safety-related programmes and initiatives over the years. Some of these include:

- An industry-wide adoption of the early-entry examination method to ensure a reduction in people's exposure when entering a workplace for the first time after it has been blasted.
- The introduction of bolts and nets on the face, which has made the most dangerous area – that is,

between the last line of support and the face – much safer.

- The implementation of the CEO-supported collision management systems project and MOSH Learning Hub's proximity detection systems, which have helped to address transport and machinery risks.
- Initiatives are also under way to address occupational lung diseases (OLDs) – such as silicosis and pneumoconiosis – noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), and TB and HIV in the industry. Efforts are being made to adopt leading practices in order to achieve these outcomes.
- Through the MOSH Learning Hub, fogger, footwall and sidewall treatment, and continuous real-dust monitoring systems, among others, have been adopted as leading practices to reduce levels of dust. The Industry Buy and Maintain Quiet Initiative has also been promoted to ensure that the industry purchases machinery that emit lower levels of noise.



Tshipi é Ntle Manganese Mining – Tshipi Borwa mine

Health initiatives

The mining industry poses several health challenges, which vary from sector to sector.

While NIHL is a health risk in almost all areas of mining, OLD, particularly silicosis, is a major issue in the gold and coal sectors. These diseases are classified as compensable occupational health illnesses.

Both pulmonary TB and HIV/AIDS are significant public health threats in South Africa. It is estimated that 80% of the country's population is infected with latent TB and 1% develops active TB every year. These rates are among the highest in the world. Where mine employees develop TB in the presence of exposure to silica dust, it also becomes an occupational illness. TB accounts for half of all reported occupational diseases.

The Minerals Council supports the Tripartite Action Plan for the elimination of silicosis and NIHL, and the Tripartite HIV and AIDS Plan for stopping the spread of HIV in the mining industry. It also participated in and supported the development of the SADC Declaration on TB in the Mining Sector, adopted by heads of state in 2012.

In its health-focused initiatives, the Minerals Council works closely with other industry bodies, including the MHSC, the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act of 1973 (ODMWA) Advisory Committee, and the South African National AIDS Council.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Masoyise Health Programme (formerly Masoyise iTB)

In 2015, the Minerals Council established Masoyise iTB, a three-year project aimed at responding to the high rates of TB and HIV in the mining industry. Masoyise iTB, which means, “let’s beat TB”, was a multi-stakeholder initiative that included representatives from various trade unions, government and other organisations, all of which worked closely to achieve the project’s goals.

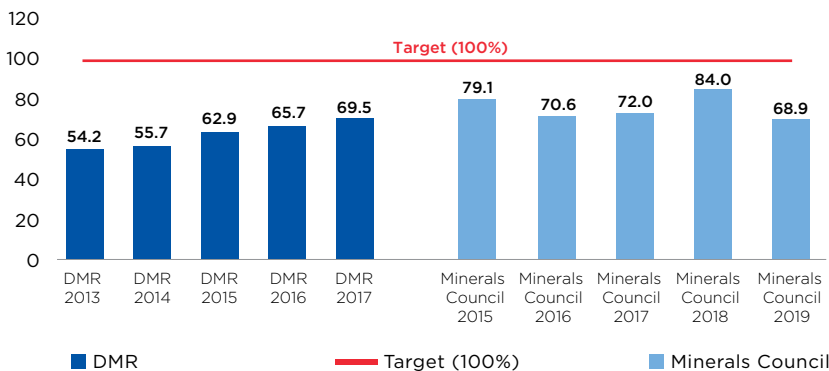
Masoyise iTB has continued beyond 2018 as the Masoyise Health Programme (Masoyise), with a wider mandate beyond TB and HIV to include non-communicable diseases (NCDs), OLDs and mental health.

Between 2016 and 2019, Masoyise:

- Made annual TB screening and HIV testing and counselling available to all mining employees
- Monitored screening performance for TB and HIV
- Conducted TB contact tracing exercises
- Offered support to small mines
- Improved health-related communication with employees

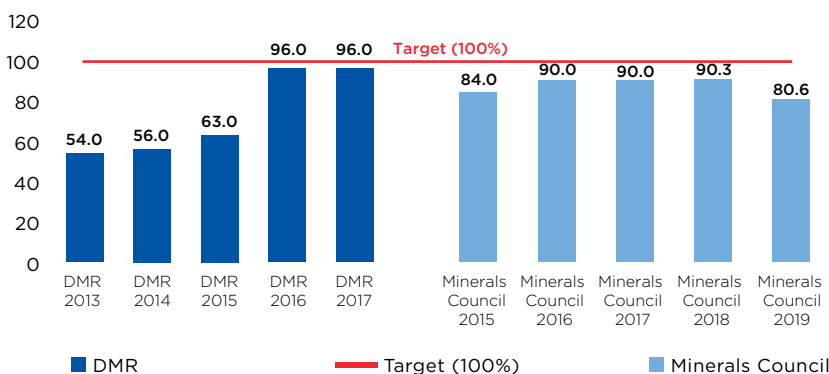
For three years, TB screening remained relatively consistent across the industry, according to reports submitted to the Minerals Council (depicted below in comparison to those submitted to the Department of Mineral

Percentage of employees counselled for HIV (%)

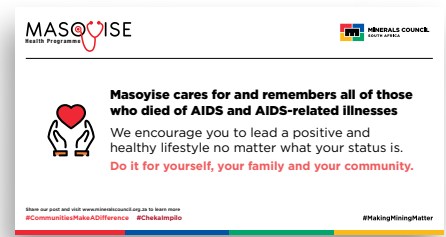


Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Minerals Council South Africa

Percentage of employees screened for TB (%)



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Minerals Council South Africa

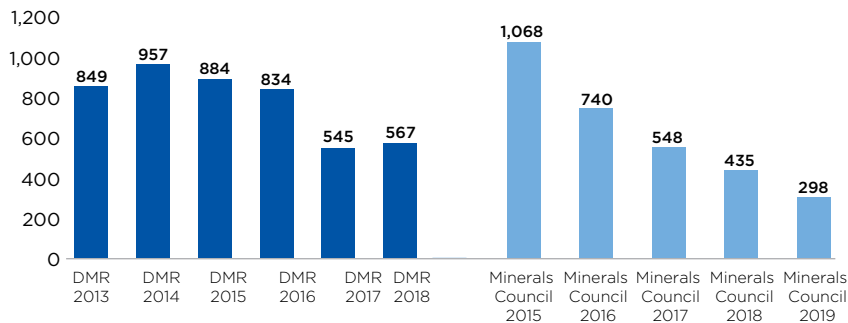


Resources and Energy (DMRE)). At 97%, TB screening was highest in the platinum sector in 2018, which was a slight improvement from the 94% reported in 2017. TB screening in the gold sector was 96% in 2018, an improvement on 2017’s 91%. As a result of the initiative’s efforts, Masoyise is on track to meet its target of reducing the industry TB incidence rate to below the national rate by the end of 2024.

Since 2016, HIV counselling has steadily increased, with 84% of mine employees counselled in 2018. Although this is still below the initiative’s target of 100%, the upward trend is promising. In 2018, the platinum sector reported the highest percentage of employees counselled at 95%, although this was a slight decline from the 99% reported in 2017.

The Masoyise Health Programme’s greatest achievement is indicated in the reduction of TB incidence to 298/100,000 in 2019 from 740/100,000 in 2016. As seen in the table on page 5, the industry is on track to meet its target.

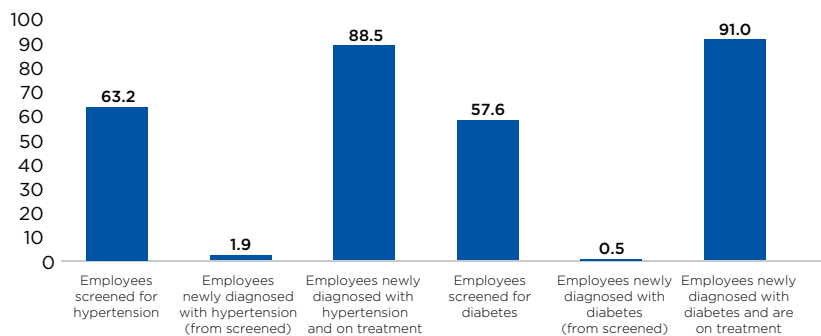
TB incidence (per 100,000 population)



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Minerals Council South Africa

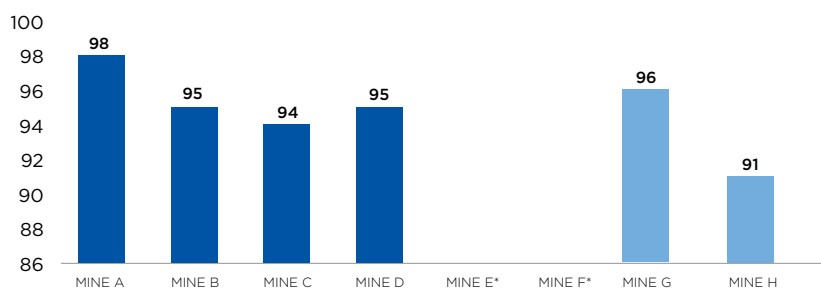
The inclusion of NCDs in the programme has shown good progress in its first year of implementation with 63.2% and 57.6% of employees screened for hypertension and diabetes respectively, as seen in the table below.

NCD programme indicators



Source: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Minerals Council South Africa

Mines' fire prevention readiness and management compliance (%)



*Mines E and F were not audited for fire

Mines' overall occupational hygiene compliance

Legal compliance	100%
Noise	65%
Dust	83%
Grand total	82%

*Mine was D not audited

Elimination of fatalities

As part of the holistic approach to the elimination of fatalities related to fires, the Minerals Council appointed an independent service provider between October and November 2019 to assess the member companies' fire prevention readiness and management in compliance to the Mandatory Code of Practice on the Prevention of Fires at Mines as well as to Chapter 5 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act No. 29 of 1996).

The table below indicates the outcomes of the fire audits conducted at platinum, gold and coal operations, with an average 95% overall compliance to fire prevention readiness and management systems.

In assessing the performance towards the elimination of OLDs and NIHL, the occupational hygiene milestone data captured on the Minerals Council system was also audited to assess its validity, reliability and verifiability in preparation for the MHSC milestones set for 2024.

The overall results and leading practices obtained during these audits were shared with the Minerals Council members as lessons to be learned as well as to improve on their current systems. In addition, the Minerals Council mandating committees monitor milestones performance on a monthly basis, presenting this data to the CEO Zero Harm Forum on quarterly basis.

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

In 2017, 2018 and 2019 the Minerals Council Board initiated a number of new health and safety measures. In 2018 we launched the inaugural annual National Day of Safety and Health in Mining. In 2019 we launched our Khumbul'ekhaya CEO-led strategy on health and safety.

Safety between 2017 and 2019

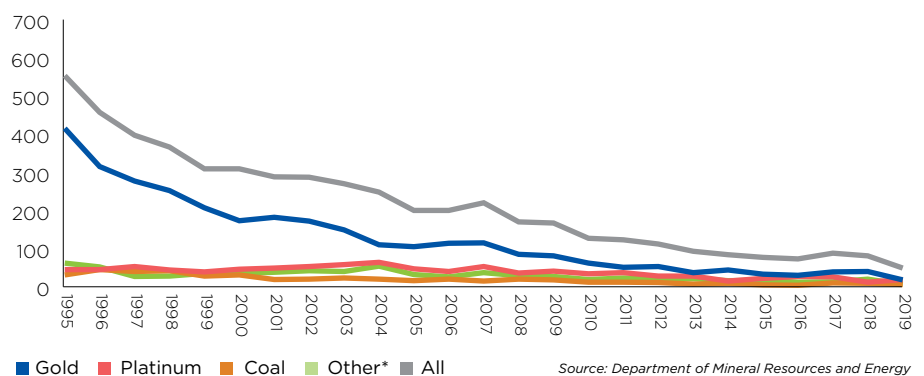
In 2017, the South African mining industry's safety figures regressed for the first time in 10 years.

A total of 90 fatalities were recorded, an increase of 17% on the year before, when 73 fatalities took place. In particular, over the latter half of 2017 and the first half of 2018, a spike in the number of accidents related to seismic activity, fall of ground and underground fire incidents was observed.

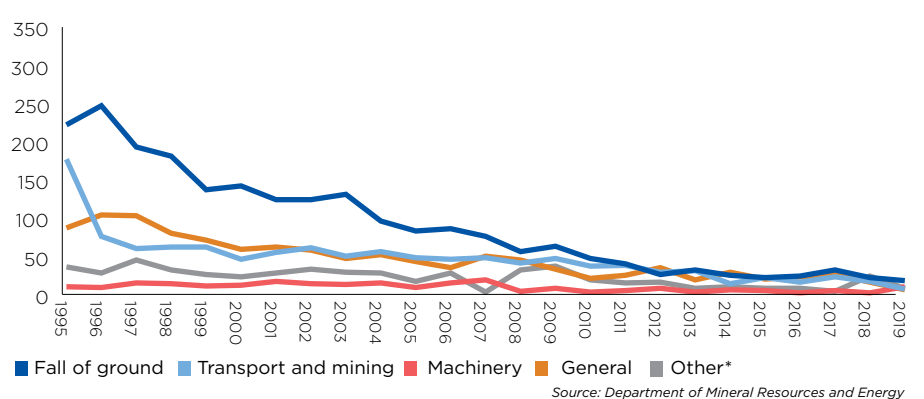
This trend shook the industry and galvanised it into action, with the Minerals Council Board immediately initiating a number of new health and safety measures. These were largely undertaken through the CEO Zero Harm Forum and included intense scrutiny of the major causes of accidents, the sharing of good practice protocols and additional research, which was conducted by the MHSC. The involvement of the Minerals Council's members throughout this process was (and continues to be) essential.

The forum also launched an industry-wide initiative that was designed to emphasise its renewed impetus on health and safety at every operation.

Mining fatalities per commodity (1995-2019)



Causes of fatalities (1995-2019)



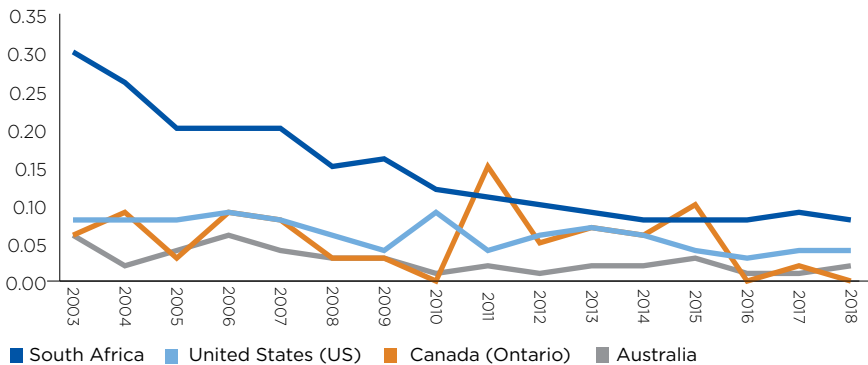
* Other includes diamonds, chrome, copper, iron ore and all others not specified above

It is worth noting that, excluding the regression in 2017, the South African mining industry's safety performance has improved in recent years in comparison to its international peers. In general, the country's performance has been on a downward trend, while countries like the United States (US), Canada and Australia have experienced peaks at various points since 2003.



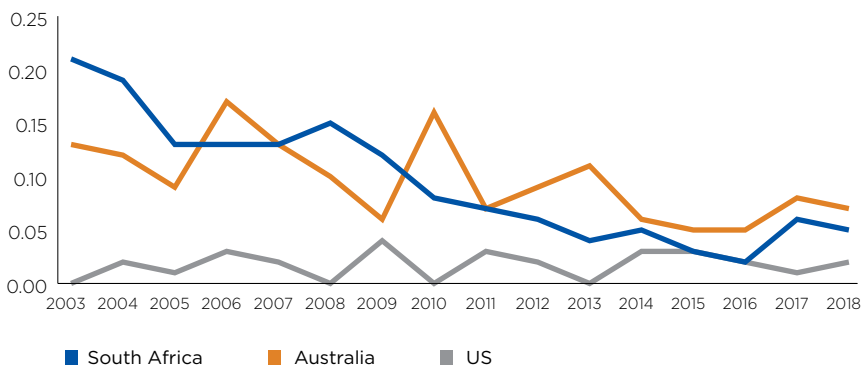
Glencore Coal - Tweefontein mine

Fatalities: South African mining industry vs international



The South African coal sector, in particular, has reduced fatalities significantly since 2003 by 78%, when it was performing worse than countries such as the US and Australia. Since 2010, this trend has shifted and the South African coal sector's fatality frequency rates now outperform coal mines in the US.

Coal mining vs international



Working together, South African mining companies, unions, employees and the regulatory authorities can make significant strides in improving the safety performance of South African mines.



Harmony - Phakisa mine

INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

National Day of Safety and Health in Mining campaign

In August 2018, the Minerals Council launched the annual National Day of Safety and Health in Mining campaign. This campaign focuses on health and safety day events hosted by the mining companies at their various operations.

The campaign has been effective in a number of ways. In the first instance, it brought several different parties together – management, employees, unions, suppliers and the inspectorate – and united them around a common

goal. Secondly, it demonstrated the forum's unambiguous stance that the deteriorating safety trend at the time was unacceptable, and its unwavering commitment to spearheading meaningful transformation in this space. Collaboration, collective learning and knowledge sharing became commonplace. And finally, the initiative saw concerted engagement with employees at every level, in every sector, and at operations across the country. It demonstrated an industry-wide cohesion that was absolutely critical to its success.

In October 2019, the launch of the CEO-led Khumbul'ekhaya strategy also marked the continuation of this annual Minerals Council campaign.

This campaign received support from the regulator, companies, unions and employees for the second year in a row in 2019. In 2019, member companies integrated the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy into their health and safety campaigns. This indicated the significance of collaboration in the improvement of mine health and safety performance as reflected in the significant reduction of fatalities in 2019.

The Minerals Council plays a leading role in initiatives to fast-track mining's progress towards

ZERO HARM



THE CEO HEARTFELT CONVERSATIONS

On 25 January 2019, 34 industry CEOs and four Minerals Council office bearers gathered for a half-day facilitated health and safety event.

Called the CEO Heartfelt Conversations, the event aimed to encourage deep and intense introspection into and facilitate meaningful engagement on health and safety-related issues in the mining industry.

While attendees agreed that improvements in safety and health performance over the past two decades had been significant, they recognised that a further step-change was required.

Discussions were open and frank, and centred on the importance of visible leadership, particularly with regards to the presence of CEOs and senior management addressing risk culture and health and safety concerns, sharing leading practice, and encouraging transparency in reporting.

Talks also centred on how reward systems should prioritise health and safety, and the importance of investing in literacy and numeracy training, considering employees' homes, ensuring health and safety efforts are both intense and consistent, and the role of risk-reducing technology. Health and safety is a multifaceted issue, and needs to be addressed through a multifaceted approach. There is, as the gathering at the Heartfelt Conversations repeatedly reiterated, no silver bullet. Concerted and collaborative efforts are necessary – every industry player needs to be involved.



Outcomes

The Heartfelt Conversations examined a number of crucial issues and, ultimately, the group agreed to the following:

- Zero harm remains the abiding aspiration guiding the industry's actions
- The step-change priority for 2019 and 2020 is the elimination of fatalities
- Health and safety, including the elimination of fatalities, need to be considered holistically

While these points are not new to conversations about health and safety in the industry, they are indicative of a renewed industry-wide commitment to prioritising them on an ongoing basis. Fatalities were singled out in particular because they have the most disastrous impacts on teams, families and communities, and because there is growing evidence that the actions that need to be taken to eliminate fatalities are different from those that need to be taken to eliminate injuries such as slips and falls.

Fatalities will therefore constitute a two-year focus for the Minerals Council, and the definition of fatalities will include those that are the result of health-related conditions during and beyond employment. Of course, other safety-related issues, as well as diseases such as OLD, NIHL, TB and HIV, will still be of critical concern to the industry.

THE CEO HEARTFELT CONVERSATIONS CONTINUED

The CEOs present also agreed that the following behaviours and practices needed to be reinforced from the top down:

- Leadership needs to be seen, heard and felt
- CEOs need to act with intent and authenticity
- CEOs need to exercise mindfulness, connectedness and purposefulness
- CEOs need to lose their defensiveness, and need to be prepared to be vulnerable in communications around health and safety
- There needs to be a shift beyond legal compliance
- CEOs need to recognise the centrality of visible leadership by CEOs
- CEOs need to recognise that, even if their company has no fatalities,

they have a responsibility to the industry and society to help those that do

The shift to a heartfelt CEO-ship culture is centred primarily on collaboration and co-learning. Every company and operation is at different stages of their health and safety journey, the CEOs recognised, and each one encounters different challenges. In order for significant progress in health and safety to be possible, companies need to learn from one another's mistakes, and work together to find holistic solutions. Furthermore, it was agreed that health and safety need to shift from being a priority, which suggests variability, to an unequivocal and universal value, which is non-negotiable.

ZERO HARM

remains the abiding aspiration guiding the industry's actions



The CEO-led Strategy on Health and Safety

This consensus led to the most critical outcome of the Heartfelt Conversations: the establishment of a CEO-led Strategy on Health and Safety. The strategy, the group agreed, needed to be a rallying cry for the step-change the industry needs, a word or phrase that spoke clearly to the strategy's intent, and that was positive, action driven, easy to remember and celebrated the diversity of the industry's workforce.

The result was Khumbul'ekhaya – the Nguni word for “remember home” – a strategy that aims to further the objectives of the National Day of Safety and Health in Mining, and includes a plan that will ensure a tangible shift in health and safety performance in the industry. The following points, which constitute the Minerals Council's action items, will be used as the plan's building blocks. In terms of these points, the Minerals Council commits to:



Heartfelt leadership on culture

- Serving as a conscience by questioning data and challenging the status quo, building trust between companies and enhancing transparency
- Facilitating the setting of common goals for the industry, including a rallying cry for the envisaged step-change, and co-ordinating collaborative programmes more effectively
- Leading the re-creation of a tripartite compact around health and safety that includes a shared

vision and assists in breaking unhelpful barriers to achieving it in the MHSC, MQA and beyond



Heartfelt leadership on training

- Formulating industry-wide standards and guidelines on training, including quality, effectiveness, validity, methods, materials, facilities and language
- Facilitating training collaboration, while taking into account mining type, geography, maturity, risk profile of assets, and leading practices on training



Heartfelt leadership on learning from others

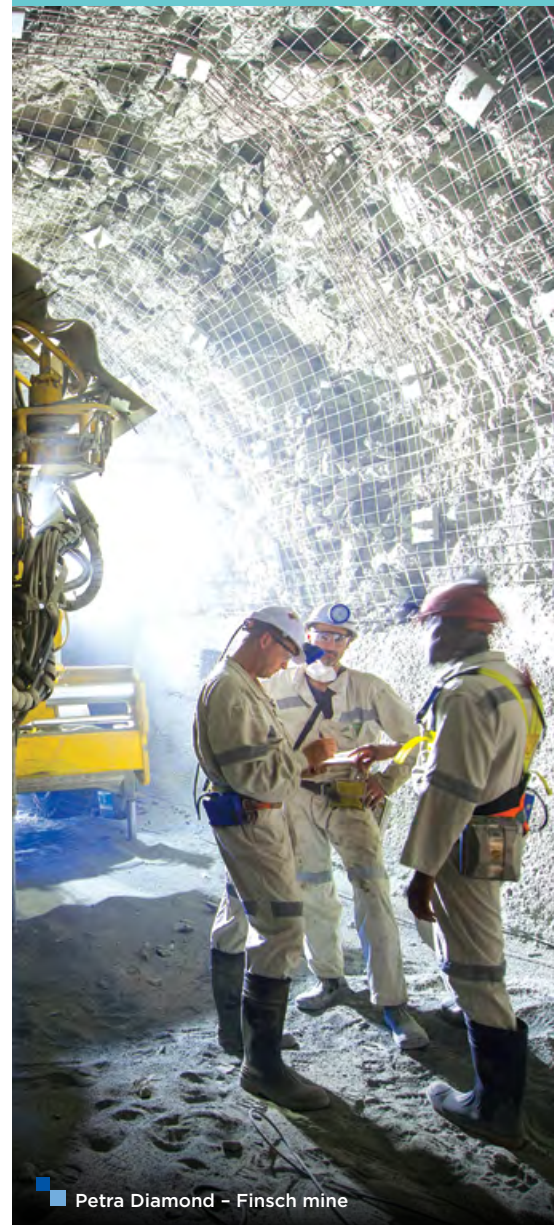
- Driving the MOSH Learning Hub harder as a robust, focused approach and common platform that facilitates learning from leading practices
- Facilitating lessons learnt from high-potential incidents (HPIs) and fatalities
- Facilitating both peer and independent reviews



Heartfelt leadership on monitoring, evaluation and communication

- Keeping an updated scoreboard based on robust, holistic health and safety data showing where various organisations are at on the journey (including success with critical controls) and providing necessary support
- Improving communications around industry health and safety achievements

The new strategy has reconfigured the work of the CEO Zero Harm Forum, and all subsequent meetings have now been held with it firmly in mind. All work performed and all future targets are measured against the strategy's key principles. Khumbul'ekhaya is an unwavering commitment that health and safety begins with the CEOs who direct and guide the industry, in collaboration with the governmental and organised labour partners with whom they work. It is the step-change required to eliminate fatalities in mining.



Petra Diamond – Finsch mine

KHUMBUL'EKHAYA

Khumbul'ekhaya is a strategy on health and safety that has been developed by the CEO Zero Harm Forum to drive and sustain the mining industry's pursuit of zero harm.

The emphasis on "home" directly acknowledges that fatalities have the greatest impact on loved ones at home and encourages mine employees and their managers to bear these loved ones in mind as they go about their day-to-day tasks.

The objectives of the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy are to:

- Promote a holistic approach to the elimination of fatalities
- Develop a system of understanding occupational deaths in and beyond employment
- Adopt methods for more effective and competitive training, for example through centralisation and modernisation
- Adopt global leading practice to learn better and faster from others

The Khumbul'ekhaya principles dominate every meeting, and guide and inform every health and safety-related decision. Every issue is now assessed according to the extent to which it meets or diverges from the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy.

Eliminating fatalities

Perhaps the most critical component of the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy is the need to develop a holistic approach to the elimination of fatalities. This approach needs to consider the causes of fatalities and HPIs in the South African context; identify holistic interventions that enable fatality-free operations; and introduce systems that monitor, evaluate and communicate progress on these interventions.

Developing a holistic elimination of fatalities approach is a complex process that requires a multi-disciplinary, systems-thinking methodology. Many diverse factors need to be considered. With this in mind, a systems thinking workshop was held at the Mandela Mining Precinct and was attended by a broad range of experts in the fields of safety; health; environmental, rock, mechanical and electrical engineering; and behaviour and training.

The workshop revealed that the industry is not continually learning from incidents – not just fatalities but also HPIs, which should be analysed as leading indicators. It also emphasised that effective CEO leadership is required to drive a culture that makes a holistic approach to risk management an organisational priority, and that the growth of systems thinking skills is necessary. The Minerals Council will be assessing the outcomes of this workshop as its Khumbul'ekhaya work continues.

Understanding occupational deaths

The Khumbul'ekhaya strategy demands that national and international mechanisms for tracking deaths related to occupational diseases, during and post-employment, be explored. Research has been conducted on this issue and a report drawn up.

The report offers an overview of international leading practice and the steps that need to be in place to ensure that occupational deaths can be identified. It also provides options to improve reporting on occupational deaths, although these are complicated by the many structural challenges that are experienced in South Africa.

A number of databases, the report recommends, should be used to start tracking deaths during and post-employment. In order for these databases to be as detailed and comprehensive as possible, however, other role-players beyond the industry need to be involved. These include doctors reporting on occupational diseases and filling in occupational causes of death. The databases, which should be expanded to include all relevant employee-related information, also need to be digitised and monitored in conjunction with key industry stakeholders.

A further study on TB mortality is under way to fully understand the reasons for deaths in miners who contracted TB and to find ways of reducing these deaths in the future. The results of the study will be available by the end of 2019.



The National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH) is also conducting a detailed study into the causes of deaths among female employees. This will be compared with the causes of deaths among men and it is envisaged that the research will shed light on how these deaths can be prevented. Results are expected during 2020.

Through these studies, it is hoped that prevention mechanisms will be identified and acted upon to reduce the number of deaths that are caused by occupational diseases in the industry.

Implementing effective and competitive training

At the CEO Heartfelt Conversations, CEOs expressed the need to look at training as one of the ways in which to achieve the required step-change in health and safety. The industry, the CEOs suggested, needs to establish a more collaborative approach to training. Training shouldn't be a mere legislative box-ticking exercise but should rather incorporate lessons and exercises that are of the highest quality; that are relevant to the specific needs of employees, companies and the industry; and that always consider health and safety first.

An assessment has been conducted across four companies mining three different commodities. The aim of the assessment was to understand the industry's prevailing training methods, the languages companies employ, the impact of modernisation and how low levels of literacy are addressed.

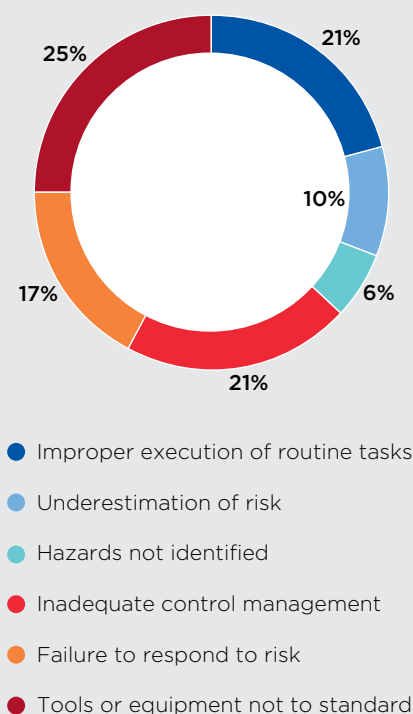
The results of the study were ultimately positive, indicating that training has improved in recent years and that a great deal has been invested in upgrading facilities to improve their quality and effectiveness. Important issues that still need to be addressed were highlighted, and these will be used to develop a proposal and implementation plan on further integrating health and safety in training going forward.

Learning better and faster from others

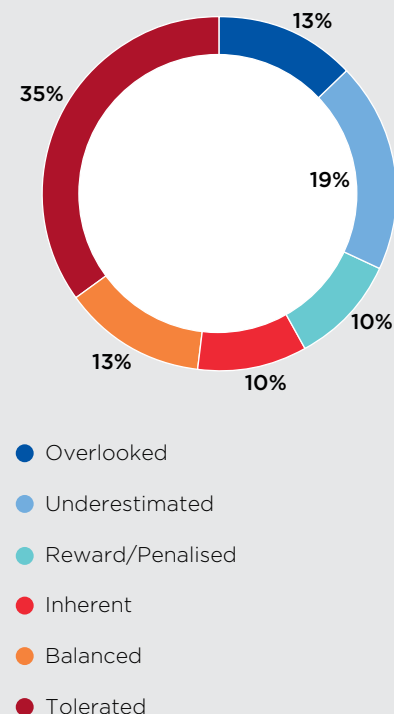
Khumbul'ekhaya is clear on the fact that all industry players need to learn better and faster from one another. Companies need to identify aids and barriers to learning, the CEO Zero Harm Forum has agreed, as well as take heed of global leading practice and implement these lessons effectively.

A thematic analysis of safety incident reports uploaded by mining companies has been conducted, which identified clear causes and reasons for risk taking. These issues are indicated in the graphs below:

Most notable/probable cause



Reason for risk taking



An in-depth review of the many lessons learnt by the industry was conducted, and possible CEO actions were outlined to address these learnings. The CEO Zero Harm Forum, under the auspices of the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy, will be looking at these recommendations and implementing them as applicable or appropriate at particular operations. Once again, the forum and Khumbul'ekhaya will depend heavily on the individual actions of its members as this work unfolds.

Since its inception at the CEO Heartfelt Conversations, Khumbul'ekhaya quickly galvanised industry players into action. Detailed assessments and research have been conducted that outline the issues that need to be addressed in order for a sustainable step-change in health and safety to be possible.

Khumbul'ekhaya was formally launched on an industry-wide basis on 1 October 2019 as part of the Minerals Council National Day of Safety and Health in Mining. The strategy's efforts will be reviewed regularly.

KHUMBUL'EKHAYA SUPPORTS INDUSTRY'S COVID-19 RESPONSE



In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. This has consequences for individual health, workplace impact and general economic impact on countries.

As a significant contributor to South Africa's economy, the mining sector has an important role to play in mitigating the impact of the virus, especially on its employees, communities and operations.

The Minerals Council remains fully committed to working closely with organised labour, the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) to plan and collaborate an industry response to COVID-19.

The Khumbul'ekhaya strategy will continue in 2020 with great intensity, with many of Khumbul'ekhaya interventions re-purposed to deal with COVID-19 as a priority, while still being aligned to their original intentions.

The response to COVID-19 falls within the scope of the Khumbul'ekhaya strategy through the zero harm aspiration and 2020 priority to eliminate fatalities through prevention of infections and deaths of those infected.

Projects that have started include developing behavioural change training on COVID-19; contracting research capability to better and faster learning on all elements of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), including testing; and using geographic information system (GIS) mapping to enhance decision-making around COVID-19 in mining operations.

CEOs are also engaging in learning through sharing of leading practices and challenges related to managing the COVID-19 threat at their operations and, more broadly, in the communities and homes of their employees.

The Minerals Council also recognises that the accessibility of information and transparency is critical. The Minerals Council has made available a public portal to share insight into the Minerals Council's position on COVID-19, useful links, documents and the latest available information on the virus as it relates to the South African mining industry.

THE WAY FORWARD

In 2019, South Africa's mining industry recorded the lowest number of fatalities since record-keeping began more than a century ago. Following a renewed, industry-wide focus on safety and health, the total number of fatalities fell dramatically by 37% in 2019, from 81 fatalities in 2018 to 51.

The Minerals Council, with its Khumbul'ekhaya strategy, will be the first to admit that even one fatality is one too many. That said, the reduction demonstrates that the effects of initiatives such as the National Day of Safety and Health in Mining were beneficial, and that there is value in continuing with strategies such as Khumbul'ekhaya to accelerate the achievement of the MHSC Summit milestones on occupational health and safety.

But, as we all know, improvements and successes cannot be cause for complacency. On the contrary, industry efforts, as spearheaded by the Minerals Council, not only need to be maintained, they must also be intensified. In everything we do, the health and safety of the half a million people who work in the mining industry needs to be prioritised. It is our collective responsibility – as industry, government and organised labour – that they continually remember home and that they always reach it.


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