



*A publication of the
Oregon Independent Aggregate Association
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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Oregon Independent Aggregate Association Newsletter

April 2025

Since the beginning of 2025 there have been nine surface mine fatalities reported on MSHA's website. This is a substantial increase from the 5 fatalities year-to-date last year (2024). Although this is down from the year-to-date numbers in 2023 (17) and 2022 (13). Of these nine tragic events this year, four were categorized as powered haulage, two were machinery, and one each were fall of face/rib/high wall, fall/slide material, and explosives & breaking agents. ([MSHA - Mine Accident Classifications - A listing of definitions for MSHA Accident Classifications](#))

These accidents show the need for safety programs, protocols and rules that we should follow. If you haven't already, look at these fatality alerts (see attachment) and use them to raise awareness and prevent similar accidents at your mine. I think all of us can relate to some, if not all, of these events and how they could occur if certain procedures and rules are not followed.

Currently, we are four months along with the new Trump administration. If you follow the news, there are various articles on different administrative decisions that are going to affect MSHA and potentially miner's safety. (Here are the links to three articles about the Trump administration, mining, safety and MSHA: [MSHA Enforcement Amid Trump Administration Downsize](#), [Lawmakers concerned about staff cuts, office closures at MSHA | Safety+Health](#), [Trump administration pauses new miner safety measures amid pledge to reinvigorate coal - ABC News](#)) No matter how you feel about these administrative decisions, OUR safety is OUR responsibility. We need to ensure the safety at our mines for ourselves and everyone else that is at them. This is despite any challenges our regulatory agencies may be facing.

**Erwin Hackett
Chairmann**

MINE FATALITY – On **March 28, 2025**, a miner was fatally injured at a surface mine when sand from the highwall engulfed the front-end loader he was operating. The miner was digging sand from the toe of the highwall.



BEST PRACTICES

Use mining methods that ensure highwall stability and safe working conditions.

Use appropriate equipment to gradually flatten the slope starting at the top of the highwall.

Equip front-end loaders with two-way communication systems, high strength glass, and an SCSR for breathable air when working on material that has the potential to slide or engulf mobile equipment.

Examine highwalls, spoil banks, and ground that slope into working areas. Correct unsafe ground conditions in the affected area. Conduct additional examinations as ground conditions warrant, especially during periods of changing weather conditions.

Stay clear of potentially unstable areas.

Establish and discuss safe work procedures before beginning work. Identify and control all hazards associated with the work and the methods to properly protect miners.

Train miners to assess risks and hazards and correct or barricade hazards to prevent access before beginning work activities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the 11th fatality reported in 2025, and the fifth classified as “Powered Haulage.”

MINE FATALITY – On **March 5, 2025**, a miner was fatally injured at a surface mine when flyrock from blasting operations struck him. The miner was assisting in detonating the explosives.



BEST PRACTICES

Remove all persons from the blast area unless using suitable blasting shelters to protect persons from flyrock. Wait at least 15 seconds after the blast for any flyrock to drop and settle before exiting the shelter.

Adjust stemming depth and/or decking to maintain adequate burden on all sections of the blast hole. Consider geology, face geometry, and surface topography when developing a drill pattern.

Determine the actual burden for all face holes along their length and adjust the explosive power factor along the borehole accordingly.

Only use approved capacitor discharge or generator blasting machines.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the tenth fatality reported in 2025, and the first classified as “Explosives and Breaking Agents.”

MINE FATALITY –

March 5, 2025, a miner died while clearing strips of old belt rubber from a belt conveyor tail roller. During this process, the belt conveyor started to operate, causing the miner to become entangled in between the fluted tail roller and the belt.



BEST PRACTICES

De-energize, lock out, tag out, and block belt conveyors against hazardous motion before performing repairs or maintenance.

Provide safe access where miners work.

Install adequate guarding to prevent any contact between miners and moving parts of a belt conveyor, including rollers and head and tail areas.

Establish policies and procedures for conducting maintenance on belt conveyors.

Task train miners on safe work practices.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the ninth fatality reported in 2025, and the fourth classified as “Powered Haulage.”

MINE FATALITY – On **February 22, 2025**, a contractor died when the bridge providing access into the kiln shifted, causing the skid steer loader he was operating to fall backwards into the clinker chute.



BEST PRACTICES

Provide safe access to all working areas.

Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions for bridges and ramps.

Routinely examine metal structures for indications of structural weakness (corrosion, fatigue cracks, bent/buckling beams, braces or columns, loose/missing connectors, broken welds, etc.).

Train miners on their assigned tasks, including how to identify, report, and correct hazards.

Examine work areas at the beginning and throughout the day for changing conditions that may affect safety.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the seventh fatality reported in 2025, and the third classified as "Powered Haulage."

MINE FATALITY – On **February 12, 2025**, a miner died when the ground beneath the drilling rig he was operating failed, causing it to overturn and fall off the highwall.



BEST PRACTICES

Examine highwalls and correct hazardous conditions before beginning work and as ground conditions warrant.

Be aware of changes from the freeze and thaw cycles affecting the condition of the highwall.

Operate mobile drills perpendicular to the edge of the highwall.

Monitor work activities to ensure miners follow safe work procedures.

Train equipment operators to identify hazardous highwall conditions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the sixth fatality reported in 2025, and the second classified as “Machinery.”

MINE FATALITY – On **January 30, 2025**, a miner died when a front-end loader operator unknowingly lowered a pallet of stone onto him.



BEST PRACTICES

Develop traffic rules for mobile equipment and miners on foot. Ensure the Safety Program for Surface Mobile Equipment includes actions taken to identify hazards and risks to reduce fatalities.

Install collision warning technologies and added safety features such as cameras, sensors and radar.

Ensure adequate clearance and visibility when operating mobile equipment and be aware of where all persons on foot are located.

Wear high visibility clothing and communicate your location and intended movements to mobile equipment operators. Ensure they acknowledge your presence before you travel near mobile equipment.

Train all persons to recognize the limited visibility and blind areas inherent to the operation of self-propelled mobile equipment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the fifth fatality reported in 2025, and the second classified as “Powered Haulage.”

MINE FATALITY – On **January 30, 2025**, a miner died when he became entangled in a log washer. The victim was starting the log washer when he lost his balance and fell into the log washer.



BEST PRACTICES

Ensure equipment and safety devices are maintained in safe working condition.

Ensure miners are clear and free from hazards when starting equipment and performing tasks.

Always use fall protection equipment, safety belts and lines or personnel lifts when working at heights and near openings where there is a danger of falling.

Lock Out and Tag Out machinery against hazardous motion.

Maintain equipment in accordance with manufacturer's means to care for and service equipment.

Train miners in the recognition of hazards and safe work procedures.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the fourth fatality reported in 2025, and the first classified as “Machinery.”

MINE FATALITY – On **January 29, 2025**, a miner died when a piece of rock fell from the highwall and struck the cab of the drill he was operating.



BEST PRACTICES

Scale highwalls from a safe location to eliminate hazards such as loose, unconsolidated rocks and overhangs.

Scale highwalls from a safe location to eliminate hazards such as loose, unconsolidated rocks and overhangs.

Conduct highwall examinations prior to working or traveling near the highwall and more frequently as ground conditions warrant, especially after periods of rain, freezing, and thawing.

Examine highwalls from multiple perspectives (bottom, sides, and top/crest) and look for signs of cracking and other geologic features that could lead to instability.

Use auxiliary lighting during low light conditions to conduct highwall examinations and illuminate active work areas.

Ensure miners work, travel, and operate equipment at safe distances from highwalls.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the third fatality reported in 2025, and the first classified as “Fall of Face, Rib, Side or Highwall.”

MINE FATALITY – On **January 3, 2025**, a miner died when an excavated trench collapsed and engulfed him. The victim was replacing a 12-inch discharge line in the trench when the wall collapsed.



BEST PRACTICES

Stay clear of potentially unstable areas. Do not enter trenches if the trench walls are not properly supported for the full height or sloped to a safe angle.

Establish and discuss safe work procedures before beginning work. Identify and control all hazards associated with the work to be performed and the methods to properly protect persons.

[Follow OSHA Trenching and Excavation Safety Guidelines.](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This is the first fatality reported in 2025, and the first classified as “Falling, Rolling, or Sliding Rock / Material of Any Kind.”

Attention!!

We welcome and encourage all of our members to become more involved with our association. You are welcome to attend our meetings anytime. Please contact any of our board members for information on how you can become more involved, ways we can improve our association and information regarding our upcoming meetings.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.ORAGGREGATE.COM

We are always looking for information to print in the newsletter. If you have a specific article, safety information , or any other information you think will be helpful and of interest to our members, please submit them to memberreply@oraggregate.com

We are currently looking to add to our Board of Directors. If you are interested in joining us please contact any of the board of directors or come to the next meeting to discuss the possibility.

Current Board of Directors

Erwin Hackett – Chairman
Bill Leavens – Vice chairman
Melissa Bronson – Secretary-Treasurer
Erick Staley
Bill Ruchti
Andrew Siegmund

***The next meeting is scheduled for May 7th 2025 10AM
at the office of Siegmund Excavation & Construction,
Silverton Oregon***