

Department monitors safety in mines

The Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) will intensify the monitoring and evaluation of mine health and safety management systems through inspections and audits during the remainder of the year.



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“As we approach the end of the year, all mine employers, employees, managers and supervisors are alerted to the historical high number of fatalities and injuries that occur during the last quarter of the year. This period is traditionally very difficult for health and safety at mines,” the department said.

Historic data on mine accidents reveals that more fatalities reported occur during the last quarter of the calendar year.

“It is for this reason that mine employers need to put more focus on the health and safety of mineworkers during this period. In this respect, the DMRE will ensure that mines put in place shift fatigue management systems that are continuously monitored.

“Drug and alcohol tests will be done frequently during afternoon and night shifts. In cases where arrangements are in place for workers to work overtime, managers must ensure that proper supervision is carried out by all responsible mine personnel and measures are put in place to prevent accidents,” the department said.

Shortcuts could be fatal

The department said all mining operations must continue to prioritise the health and safety of mineworkers and other persons who may be directly affected by the operations at mines.

“All mineworkers and supervisors are reminded that unsafe work practices can be fatal and may lead to undesirable circumstances. Wherever there is non-compliance with the regulations and a threat to the health and safety of any persons at mines, the department will not hesitate to issue instructions, as guided by the Mine Health and Safety Act.”

The increase in the number of fatalities and injuries reported during this period is attributed to a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, poor supervision; anxiety associated with the festive season; production pressures and associated incentives, and lack focus and complacency.

In many instances, this results in workers taking short cuts and fail to comply with the applicable standards and procedures.

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