

THE MINING ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

"The voice of mining in BC since 1901"

Mining Safety Record is No Accident

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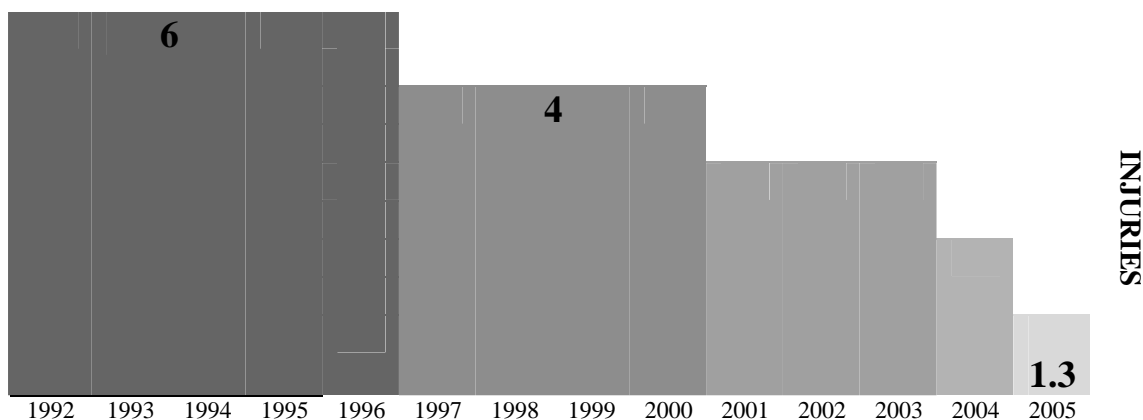
Vancouver BC -- The mining industry has become the safest heavy industry in British Columbia.

In fact, the injury rate for workers in the mining industry is now three times lower than the next closest industry in their category.

In 1996 the industry's injury rate¹ was 6 per 100 person years. By 1999 that had dropped to 4 per 100 person years and today the injury rate is just 1.3 per 100 person years. Anyone familiar with worker safety records will acknowledge this to be a considerable achievement.

Mining: B.C.'s Safest Heavy Industry

Safety Facts: Injuries per 100 person years



“Our exemplary safety record is one of our proudest accomplishments,” says Michael McPhie President & CEO of the Mining Association of BC. “Our member companies and their operating mines take safety very seriously. We’re a tight knit community, often living and working together in small towns. When one of our own is injured on the job, we all suffer.”

¹ The injury rate is determined by the number of “time-loss accidents.” A “time-loss accident” is any injury that causes a worker to take time off work. Injuries can range from miner cuts and bruises to major impairments including death.

Achieving the industry's low accident rate took hard work. While worker safety has always been a priority, the industry began in the early 1990's to introduce new safety programs and procedures, including rigorous education of the mining workforce in safety procedures.

Over the ensuing years mining safety operatives were established at mine sites, as were joint occupational health and safety committees. Employee award programs for demonstrated good safety practices were also introduced at many operating mines.

These initiatives gradually changed the culture establishing and promoting a team approach where mine workers not only took responsibility for their own safety but also for the safety of their fellow workers. Today, the results speak for themselves.

"We can't take our safety record for granted. We've worked hard to earn it and our aim is to reduce our injury rate even further," says Ron Caldwell Vice President of Health, Safety and Disability Management.

With many of the existing mines currently operating at full capacity to keep up with current mineral demand, this won't be an easy challenge. "We must all make an extra effort to ensure that our accident rate doesn't climb and indeed continues to fall to zero, our ultimate goal," says Mr. Caldwell.

Unfortunately old stereotypes live on in some circles and the industry still suffers the brunt of the misconceived perception that it is a dangerous business. While that may have been true many decades ago, it is far from the case today.

Mining in BC is a vibrant high-tech industry pioneering the use of computer modeling, global position systems (GPS), robotics and a level of worker safety training not seen in any other industry.

That mining can be dangerous, there is no doubt, but dangerous does not have to equate to unsafe. The industry's heavy investment in safety training programs over the past decade is a primary reason it is the safest heavy industry in B.C. today.

Success can also be attributed to the close working relationship between labour, management and the mines inspection branch. This tripartite collaboration is seen as essential for the continued safety of those who work in mining.

The industry places its highest value on its people. The industry safety record aside, the daily goal at every mine site is that every worker goes home safely to family and friends at the end of each shift.