

2007—Lowest Year for Fatalities!

Miners become safer from illness, injury, and death as improved safety technologies are developed and adapted by the mining industry. From 1920-29, 1,614 Kentucky miners were killed on the job. During 1990-99, 116 mining fatalities were recorded. **For the first time since 1890, there were no underground fatalities in 2007**, and only two surface mining fatalities occurred. 2007 was a record year for safety!

Other sectors may employ more people, but it is still important to note the number of fatalities each year is lower in coal mines than at many other Kentucky workplaces. (See the table at right.)

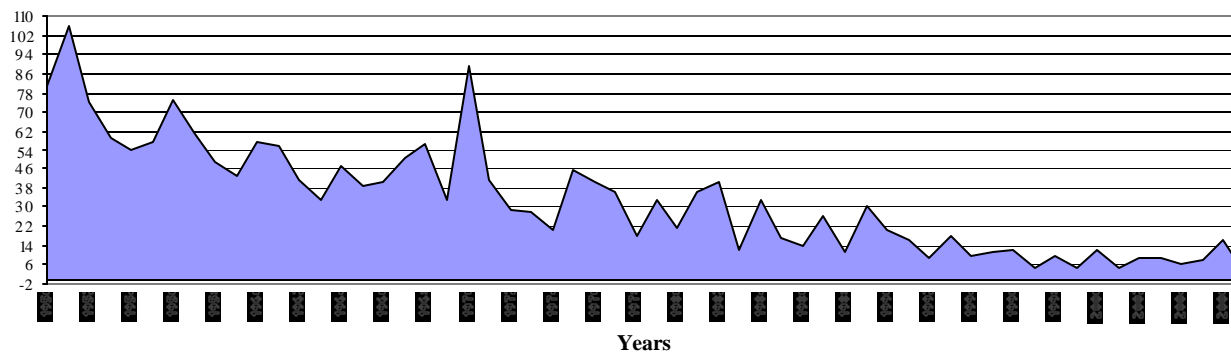
KENTUCKY CATEGORY	2003-2006 Average fatalities per year *
Service Providing	56.0
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	37.3
Transportation and Warehousing	25.8
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	24.0
Construction	22.3
Government	13.8
State / Local Government	11.5
Manufacturing	10.5
Coal Mining	10.3
Retail Trade	8.5
Professional and Business Services	5.5

*Fatalities as reported by Kentucky Department of Labor at www.labor.ky.gov/osh/officeexecutivedirector/oshfatalities.htm

COAL COUNTS

Safety is First in Kentucky Mines

**Kentucky Coal Mine Fatalities
1950 through 2007**



*Statistics from the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (formerly the Kentucky Department of Mines and Minerals).



Kentucky Coal Association
340 South Broadway, Suite 100
Lexington, Kentucky 40508-2553
859-233-4743

How safe are Kentucky's mines?

The Kentucky coal miner is as safe from injuries as the average Kentucky worker!

Kentucky coal miners typically experience fewer work-related injuries and illness than many other Kentucky workers. The U.S. Department of Labor annually compiles work-related injury and illness statistics*, expressed as an incidence rate (the number of injuries/illnesses per 100 workers). Between 2003-2006, the average annual incidence rate for Kentucky miners was 6.1. The average annual incidence rate for all Kentucky workers during the same period was 6.0. Employees in the following categories experienced more injuries and illness in an average year than did Kentucky's coal miners: health care & social assistance, agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting, manufacturing, transportation/warehousing, and construction. (See the table to the right.)

Comparing the injury rate for the 1996-2002 time period (8.21) to this latest average (6.1) shows a 26% decrease. Coal mining safety continues to improve. The same is true for all industries.

*Incidence statistics can be found at www.bls.gov/iif/oshstate.htm#KY.

What's the next step to safer mines?

The number of fatalities and injuries in Kentucky's coal mines continues to decline. However, the industry has yet to reach the goal of "zero fatalities." Behavior modification is the key to insuring miners know and want to do their work in a safe manner.

To affect behavior modification takes time, commitment, and money. The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration is charged with the primary responsibility of enforcing safety laws in coal mines. Kentucky recently adopted its own enforcement laws, duplicating the federal effort. Can't our valuable resources be better used to improve miners' safety? We think yes.

Kentucky Mine Safety and Health, 1990-2006*

Category	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006
No. of Mines	1,769	1,197	605	594	647
No. of Miners	41,761	30,805	17,150	17,190	17,893
Tons Produced (mm)	179.37	157.79	131.8	124.4	126.0
Fatalities	20	11	12	5	15

*Statistics from the Annual Report of the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing (formerly the Kentucky Department of Mines and Minerals). See <http://www.omsl.ky.gov/safetyandlicense/annualreports/>.

KENTUCKY CATEGORY	2003-2006 Average Annual Injury and Illness Rate *
Health Care & Social Assistance	9.1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	9.0
Manufacturing	8.7
Transportation and Warehousing	6.4
Construction	6.3
Coal Mining	6.1
Private Industry	6.0
State and Local Government	5.9
Wholesale Trades	5.9
Retail Trades	5.5

*The most current years for which comparable data is available from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Kentucky mine safety authorities' primary role should be miner training and education, although inspectors should retain the power to close an unsafe mine. Writing a citation which duplicates one written by a federal agency doesn't make the mine a safer workplace. But, activities to observe the miner and correct unsafe work habits can lead to safer mines. As teachers, rather than policemen, state inspectors could improve safety. They can teach the importance of working safely to avoid injuries which impact not just the miner, but his family and employer as well. By placing emphasis on training and education instead of duplicating federal roles, the state's safety agency can help achieve the goal of "zero fatalities."