

## MSHA warns of dangers for children at active, abandoned mines

Summertime is marked by vacations, relaxation and outdoor fun. This year, however, several outdoor escapades around the nation have brought tragedy to young trespassers at mine properties:

- A 16-year-old youth suffered fatal injuries after his all-terrain vehicle became airborne in an accident at a gravel mine near Albany, N.Y.

- A young boy was electrocuted when he contacted a high power line while sliding down a stockpile at a sand

and gravel mine in Grand Island, Neb., during its off-shift hours.

- Three young sisters playing in an East Milton, Fla., clay pit became trapped when a 20-foot-high ledge collapsed during a rain-storm. All three died after being buried by dirt and boulders.

"Mine and quarries- both active and abandoned- hold a special allure to children and even adults seeking adventure," said J. Davitt McAteer, assistant labor secretary for mine safety and health. "People need to understand that the dangers are real, mines are not playgrounds and trespassing on mine property can lead to tragedy."

The hazards that endanger trespassers on mine property are numerous:

- Children playing in or

around ditches, excavations or piles of material risk being suffocated or crushed by cave-ins, slides or falling overhangs.

- Trespassers who climb fences that surround mine property can fall, be cut or impaled by barbed wire, or receive an electrical shock.

- Fishing around pilings and barges can lead to electrocution, slips, falls and drowning.

- Drivers of all-terrain vehicles, off-road vehicles, snowmobiles, motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles run the risk of encountering a hole, obstruction or sudden change in terrain.

"Mine operators and miners need specialized knowledge and equipment to work safely in these areas, and they are required to follow safety rules set by the Mine

Safety and Health Administration," McAteer said. "Mines are not play areas."

McAteer urged parents to prevent their children from using mine sites as play areas and urged mine operators to make the sites less accessible. He suggested fencing, warning signs and monitoring cameras as ways to prohibit access. Warnings can be given in other ways, McAteer said, such as community meetings and educational programs in local schools.

"The death of any person on mining property is a tragedy, and the death of a child is a tragedy of the gravest proportion," said McAteer. "We must collectively do all we can to prevent any more of these accidents."

*Great News!---*

Mom's Secret Kitchen Will Be  
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**SEPT. 21**  
Hours  
9 am - 9 pm

1998 SOSA fatalities

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