



MSHA's Accident Prevention Program Safety Idea



Aging Workforce Considerations

The age of our nation's miners is increasing - half of them are over 45 years of age, compared to 41 years of age in 1998. In 2008, 10 fatalities occurred where the victim was over 60. The oldest victim was 81 years of age. Implementing the following suggestions would not only help experienced workers, but would benefit all workers:

- Never assume an employee with extensive experience is knowledgeable in the task that they are being assigned.
- Improve illumination and add bright color contrast to the workplace by painting guarding yellow or red, using bright red stop switches, and bright green start switches for electrical controls, etc.
- Increase task rotation to reduce complacency and the adverse effects of repetitive motion.
- Organize the work area to avoid the need to lift or reach above the shoulders or below the knees.
- Have supplies packaged in lighter units e.g. 40 pound bags instead of 80 pound bags.
- Encourage workers to obtain assistance when lifting heavy items.
- Repair uneven floors, and install skid resistant material, especially for stair treads -install shallow angle stairways instead of ladders.
- Use redundant alarm systems that use flashing lights, audible alarms and/or vibration, and eliminate or reduce background noise.
- Signs that are posted should have large-letter type to improve readability. For more detailed training information, NIOSH has recently published IC9505; titled "Age Awareness Training for Miners" You can download this document by clicking on the following link:
 - [CDC Information Circular 2008-133.pdf](#) (12MB)

If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can email it to zzMSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov.

If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

Issued:	05/20/2009
Tag #	AP2008-96077