

# SAFETY & HEALTH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINING INDUSTRY



CHAMBER OF MINES  
of South Africa

**MINING**  
FOR SCHOOLS

## SAFETY

The South African gold mining industry is committed to a vision of zero harm, where every miner returns from work each day in good health

### ZERO HARM REQUIRES:

- Adherence to safety and health standards and procedures
- Employers, labour and government to work together
- Safety awareness campaigns
- Safety training programmes

### SAFETY IN THE UNDERGROUND WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

- Sophisticated cooling methods and equipment reduce temperatures
- Deep-level mining requires a vast infrastructure of support mechanisms, including improved roof support using bolting and netting
- World-leading seismic monitoring and research
- Improvements in rock engineering techniques have reduced fatalities due to falls of ground by 93% over the past 20 years
- Progress in vehicle avoidance systems is helping reduce transportation incidents
- All employees have self-contained self-rescuers – a breathing apparatus which provides a minimum of 30 minutes oxygen enabling people to reach refuge bays



## HEALTH

Silicosis, tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/Aids are important health issues in the South African gold mining industry

### SILICOSIS:

Silicosis is an incurable lung disease caused by silica dust found in gold ore bodies. As a result of improved methods of underground dust management, the incidence of silicosis has reduced significantly. The industry is also working with government and labour to improve compensation.

### TUBERCULOSIS:

TB is a major public health issue caused by poor socio-economic conditions. Gold mining companies in South Africa provide comprehensive detection and treatment services for employees.

### HIV/AIDS:

Gold mining companies began providing preventative services for HIV/Aids in the mid-1980s. Mining companies were, from 2002, the first in South Africa to offer comprehensive anti-retroviral therapy to HIV-positive employees.