

DANGEROUS INDUSTRY OR DANGEROUS WORK HABITS?

An [article](#) by Marelise van der Merwe in the Daily Maverick of 6 May 2018 questions why, despite considerable improvements in the industry, mining fatalities remain unacceptably high. It begs the question of what we consider to be unacceptably high.

A statistic used globally to compare the safety of various occupations, industries and activities is the Fatal Injury Rate, which calculates the annual number of fatalities per 100 000 persons.

Using data from the Chamber of Mines of South Africa's 'Facts and Figures Pocket Book', approximately 500 000 people are employed in the mining industry. According to the Daily Maverick article, there were 86 fatalities in 2017. By my calculation that would make the Fatal Injury Rate 17.2. By comparison, the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics has determined a Fatal Injury Rate of 11.4 in the Mining/Quarrying/Oil/Gas Extraction Industry in that country. The South African Statistic should therefore be of great concern.



The high numbers of fatalities in South African Mines are in the spotlight again

The article debates whether the high fatality rate is a global mining industry phenomenon or a South African one - it is probably a bit of both. Mining worldwide does seem to be one of the industries with a higher fatality rate than others.

Here is something to consider. According to a World Health Organisation report on road injuries, the Fatal Injury Rate for South Africa is 25.1, compared to 10.6 in the United States, and a world average of 17.

It seems that South Africans live dangerously, whether we are at work or traveling on the roads. And I would venture to suggest that in both cases we follow dangerous habits that we don't recognise anymore; cracks in the system that we have learnt to live with.

Have a look at the video ["Minor cracks - Major disasters"](#) on why we live with these and what we can do about it.

Click [here](#) to visit our website.