

# Entry into Abandoned & Unventilated Mines

Each year several miners escape "close calls" with bad air in unventilated mine areas. In Canada, on average, one miner dies from asphyxiation or toxic gas poisoning.

In stagnant air, much of the oxygen may be removed by oxidation of minerals and organic matter or by absorption into mine water. As well, gases such as carbon monoxide, methane and hydrogen sulfide may accumulate, sometimes to the point of making the stagnant atmosphere toxic and/or explosive.

## **Employers & Supervisors**

- Effectively barricade the entrance to all abandoned areas (signs alone are not sufficient).
- Post "NO ENTRY" warning signs.
- Ensure these protective measures have been completed and remain in place.
- Use competent persons to test for oxygen, explosive and toxic gases prior to re-entry in any unventilated area.

## **Workers**

- Do not enter an area that is barricaded or where barricades have been disturbed but not removed. Check with your supervisor. Remember, there is no way you can smell an oxygen deficient atmosphere.

*Occupational Health & Safety*  
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