



**Enquiries: C DLAMINI**  
**Reference: CIOM-INSTR.NOV/2025**  
**Date: 01/12/2025**

To: All Employers in the South African Mining Industry

Dear All,

**RE: INSTRUCTION ON PREVENTION OF SHAFT AND WINDER ACCIDENTS ISSUED  
IN TERMS OF SECTION 49(1) OF THE MINE HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT, 1996 (ACT  
NO. 29 OF 1996), AS AMENDED**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. The Department has noted with great concern the increasing number of shaft and winding-related accidents occurring within the South African mining industry.
- 1.2. On 27 November 2023, a disastrous winding accident occurred at Impala 11 shaft resulting in multiple injuries and loss of life.
- 1.3. Further, on the 23 May 2025 about 260 employees were kept underground as a result of rocks that fell from a skip and damaged the shaft infrastructure at Sibanye Kloof 7 shaft.
- 1.4. On the 7 October 2025, a female onsetter was fatally injured at Blyvoor Gold mine when she fell down the shaft whilst embarking into the shaft examination basket.
- 1.5. Recently, a cage door opened and flipped upwards at Impala Platinum Styldrift Mine whilst the conveyance with 44 employees was in motion.
- 1.6. Accidents continue to be reported of employees kept underground for a prolonged period as a result of shaft/winder related challenges. On the 27 November 2025 an incident occurred at Harmony Gold Doornkop mine where 418 employees were kept underground allegedly as a result of a dewatering column coupling failure.

1.7. From the 1 January 2024 up to date, there has been about 72 shaft and winder-related incidents reported by the mining industry. The major contributors of the incidents include the following challenges:

- Objects falling in shaft.
- Winder/conveyance running out of control.
- Fracture/Failure of Rope/Connection.
- Fracture/Failure of Sheaves/Shaft/Bearings.
- Conveyance/Shaft/Crosshead.
- Derailments.
- Conveyance leaving Guides.
- Fracture/Failure of Brakes.
- Safety Catches.
- Overwind.
- Depth Indicator.

1.8. These accidents raise concerns regarding industry-wide adherence to the respective **legal requirements including Regulation 8.13 of the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act 29 of 1996, as amended (MHSA))** relating to the design, safe operation, examination and maintenance of shaft and winding plants.

1.9. To prevent further loss of life, injuries and damage to shaft and winding equipment, the following Instruction is applicable to all mines in South Africa.

## 2. STATUTORY WINDER INSTRUCTION

### 2.1. Risk Assessment

- The mines to conduct a risk assessment on all the shaft and winders to ensure compliance with the legal provisions.

## **2.2. Design**

- **Regulation 8.13 of the MHSA** must also be adhered to in terms of the design, safe operation and running of all winding plants at the mines.

## **2.3. Training**

- Engineers and artisans must be properly trained in respect of the design and controls of the shaft and winding plants according to the legislation and Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).
- Shaft and winding plant training for supervisors and artisans is compulsory and must be completed for all fields: Electrical, Mechanical and Electronics, including OEM specialized training.

## **2.4. Appointments**

- Any person working on the shaft and winding plant must be appointed in terms of the MHSA including third parties and OEM representatives.
- Only artisans that have completed shaft and winding plant training and found competent must be appointed to carry out maintenance and repairs on the shaft/winding plant.

## **2.5. Reporting**

- The employer must timely report to the office of the Principal Inspector of Mines (PIOM) any accident and dangerous occurrence in terms of Chapter 23 of the Mine Health and Safety Act as amended.

# **3. ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE**

**3.1.** This instruction takes effect immediately.

**3.2.** The Department will conduct focused inspections and audits to ensure compliance.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. All employers are reminded of their duties under **Section 2 of the MHSA**, to operate mines in a manner that safeguards the health and safety of employees and persons affected by mining activities.
- 4.2. The recent winding accidents demonstrate the need for strengthened risk controls, enhanced engineering governance, renewed skills focus, strict legal compliance and stronger accountability structures.

Yours faithfully



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**PRINCIPAL INSPECTOR OF MINES**  
**NORTH WEST- RUSTENBURG REGION**  
**DATE: 01/12/2025**