



DMM Safety Alert: Youth Drowns on Mine Site

On Tuesday, October 16, 2012, a twelve year old boy drowned in a quarry pond. The child and two other boys were playing along the edge of the pond when the one boy entered the water and quickly disappeared from view. Because of the depth of the water and poor visibility, the boy was not recovered until late the next day.

The use of mine sites for recreational activities such as riding ATV's, off-road bikes, horseback riding and swimming, has been a serious issue for mine operators over the years. In the last five years, nationwide, there have been 103 deaths related to trespassing on active and abandoned mine sites. Approximately half of these involved swimming or diving activities. The Virginia Division of Mineral Mining promotes the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration's "Stay Out, Stay Alive" program. Brochures and other materials to increase public awareness of the dangers of trespassing on mine sites are available through DMM. Mine operators and others are encouraged to visit the MSHA web site, www.msha.gov, for access to all information and materials associated with the "Stay Out, Stay Alive" program.

Virginia's laws and regulations governing mineral mines require mine operators to take all reasonable precautions to guard against trespassing. Recommendations from the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining include:

- Signs and barricades should be utilized to warn people away from hazardous areas on active mine sites. While fencing is not required on active mine sites, it is a deterrent that should be considered where practical. Fencing is required around pits/quarries on abandoned sites.
- Warning signs utilized should specify the hazards and proper actions to be taken.
- Install gates at all entrances to the mine and ensure they are closed and locked when there is little or no activity at the mine.
- Constantly monitor the mine property for signs of trespassing and take action if positive signs are found. This should include making a report to local law enforcement.
- Have direct contact with your neighbors to discuss the dangers of unauthorized entry to the mine property.

