

Kumba digs deep to save lives

NO DEATHS ON THE JOB OR RELATED TO IT: ZERO FATALITIES AT OPERATIONS FOR TWO YEARS

» **Loss of life does not have to be an inevitable byproduct of mining – safety boss.**

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Three years ago, Kumba Iron Ore CEO Themba Mkhwanazi laid down a “sacred covenant code”, declaring that not a single person would lose their life by accident or mine-related illness while working in the mine.

It was an ambitious pledge, considering the scope of Kumba's operations: Sishen mine, near the town of Kathu in the Northern Cape, and one of the largest open pit mines in the world; and Kolomela mine, near Postmasburg in the Northern Cape, which employ 3 800 miners.

Yesterday, on World Day for Safety and Health at Work, Kumba showcased its innovative ways of curbing deaths. It started by challenging managers to change their mindset on safety and un-

derstand that whatever happens on their watch is a reflection of their leadership.

Entrenching a company-wide culture of zero harm, elimination of fatalities programme and a holistic approach to health has worked for Kumba, with zero fatalities since May 2016. It has also seen a 67% drop in serious incidents and injuries at its Sishen, Kolomela and Saldanha Port operations.

“Fatalities do not have to be an inevitable byproduct of mining. If we can work one day with zero harm, we can do two, four, 100 and more. We know what the fatal risks are, and we need to manage them properly,” says Philip Fourie, head of safety and health at Kumba.

Safety results now form part of employee key performance indicators, and as such, affect their bonuses.

“We all play a role in preventing accidents so we set out sacred covenant rules and if you break them, you lose your job. Preserving the lives of our employees is key for us,” says Fourie.

Kumba has introduced new technologies to reduce exposure



TECHNOLOGY. Kumba mines uses drones to reduce the need for employees to do physical blast clearances.

to work hazards, such auto-braking trucks to prevent collisions, auto-drilling that allows drill operators to work in air-conditioned cabins away from dust and bulldozers that can be operated remotely in risky conditions. The

company uses drone technology, reducing the need for employees to do physical blast clearances and separation of vehicles and humans to minimise contact.

The company also uses state-of-the-art fatigue management

systems to predict fatigue risk and monitor employee fatigue in real time. Supervisors can then take immediate action and send employees to the mine's fatigue centre for evaluation and a break.

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