

## WARNING!

### SHAFTS

The collar or top of a mine shaft is especially dangerous.

The rock at the surface is often decomposed. Timbers may be rotten or missing. It is dangerous to walk or ride **ANYWHERE** near a shaft opening - the whole area is often ready and waiting to slide into the shaft, along with the curious. Mine shafts are often concealed by large mounds of dirt and rock. What appears as a cool hill for "catching air" may lure you into taking the last ride of your life. Think before you ride.



The fall down a shaft is generally accompanied by falling rocks and timbers. Even if a person



survived such a fall, it may be impossible to climb back out.

A shaft sunk inside a tunnel is called a winze. In many old mines, winzes have been boarded

over. If these boards have decayed, a perfect trap is waiting.

### WATER

Many tunnels have standing pools of water which could conceal holes in the floor. Pools of water also are common at the bottom of shafts. It is usually impossible to estimate the depth of the water, and a false step could lead to drowning.

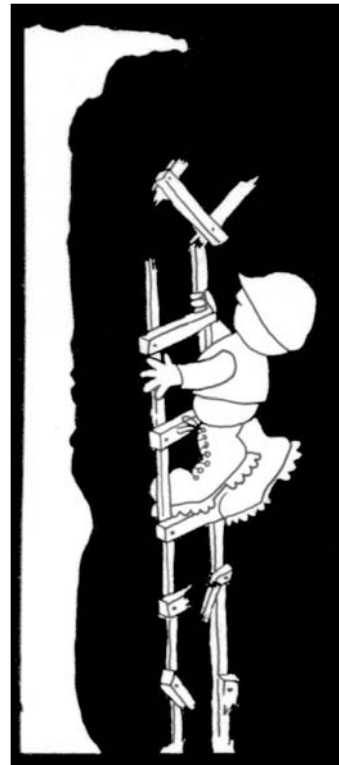


### LADDERS

Ladders in most abandoned mines are unsafe. Ladder rungs are often missing or broken. Some will fail under the weight of a child because of dry rot. Vertical ladders are particularly dangerous

### CAVE-INS

Cave-ins are an obvious danger. Areas that are likely to cave often are hard to detect. Minor disturbances, such as vibrations caused by walking or speaking, may cause a cave-in. If a person is caught, he can be crushed to death. A less cheerful possibility is to be trapped behind a cave-in without anyone knowing you are there. Death may come through starvation, thirst, or gradual suffocation.



### TIMBER

The timber in abandoned mines can be weak from decay. Other timber, although apparently in good condition, may become loose and fall at the



slightest touch. A well-timbered mine opening can look very solid when in fact the timber can barely support its own weight. There is the constant danger of inadvertently touching a timber and causing the tunnel to collapse.

### BAD AIR

"Bad air" contains poisonous gases or insufficient oxygen.

Poisonous gases can accumulate in low areas or along the floor. A person may enter such areas breathing the good air above the gases but the motion caused by walking will mix the gases with the good air, producing a possibly lethal mixture for him to breathe on the return trip.

Because little effort is required to go down a ladder, the effects of "bad air" may not be noticed, but when climbing out of a shaft, a person requires more oxygen and breathes more deeply. The result is dizziness, followed by unconsciousness. If the gas doesn't kill, the fall will.

**STAY OUT  
AND  
STAY ALIVE!**

## EXPLOSIVES

Many abandoned mines contain old explosives left by previous workers. This is extremely dangerous.

Explosives should never be handled by anyone not thoroughly familiar with them. Even experienced miners hesitate to handle old explosives. Old dynamite sticks and caps can explode if stepped on or just touched.



## RATTLESNAKES, BATS, AND RODENTS

Old mine tunnels and shafts are among the favorite haunts of rattlesnakes - to cool off in summer, or to search for rodents and other small animals. Any hole or ledge, especially near the mouth of the tunnel or shaft, can conceal a snake.

Bats commonly use mine openings for shelter. Occasionally, bats can carry rabies.

Some species of mice and rats carry hantavirus, an airborne disease often fatal to humans.



## RESCUE PROBLEMS

**NO INEXPERIENCED PERSON SHOULD ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE VICTIM OF A MINE ACCIDENT!**

**CALL THE COUNTY SHERIFF.** He is in the best position to organize a rescue operation.

Attempting to rescue a person from a mine accident is usually difficult and dangerous for both the victim and the rescuer. Even professional rescue teams, though trained to avoid all unnecessary risks, face death or injury. Adults who are tempted to enter a mine must realize and respect the inherent hazards associated with abandoned mines and should teach all children about these extreme dangers.

### **DON'T VANDALIZE!**

Fences, barricades, and warning signs are there for your safety. Disturbing or vandalizing them is dangerous and illegal. Mine owners have constructed these safeguards at their expense for your protection. Please cooperate with their efforts.

Those who remove tools, equipment, building materials, and other objects from mines and buildings around mines do not go home with souvenirs, but with stolen property. Many mines that look abandoned are private property - they are only idle, and waiting to be reworked.

***THERE IS ONLY ONE SAFE WAY TO DEAL WITH ABANDONED MINES - STAY OUT!***

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR TO REPORT AN ABANDONED MINE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Nevada Commission on Mineral Resources  
DIVISION OF MINERALS**  
400 W. King St., Ste. 106  
Carson City, NV 89703-4212  
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# DANGERS IN AND AROUND ABANDONED MINES

