

Fatal Mining Accidents Reach Their Lowest Level on Record

According to Sernageomin's annual report, the industry's fatality rate has decreased by 83% since 2010.

Diario Financiero. March 12, 2025.

By Patricia Marchetti

This past October marked 14 years since the rescue of the 33 miners at the San José mine. Over the same period, from 2010 to the present, the National Geology and Mining Service (Sernageomin) has published an annual report on accident rates in the sector, which in 2024 reached a historic low in both key indicators: nine fatal accidents resulting in 11 deaths.

According to the report, six of the fatalities occurred in small-scale mining, three in large-scale mining, and two in artisanal mining. The report does not include incidents related to illegal mining activities.

"The 2024 figures are better than any year on record in terms of accident rates and types of accidents, while always keeping in mind that no death is a reason for celebration," Sernageomin's national director, Patricio Aguilera, told Diario Financiero.

Since 2010, the fatality rate in the mining extraction industry has decreased by 83%, while deaths have dropped from 45 to 11.

Over the same period, the study estimates that the accident rate in large- and medium-scale mining has declined by 88%, while in small-scale mining, it has fallen by 74%.

Looking even further back, Sernageomin identifies that in the year 2000, the fatality rate was 0.18, whereas in 2024, it had dropped to 0.02.

"One of our main focuses as a service has been to drive regulatory changes to strengthen safety and encourage the formalization of all mining activities," Aguilera stated.

"We are strengthening the oversight of mining operations with a focus on risk prevention, closure plans, and compliance with environmental regulations." He also detailed that proposals have been made to update the Mining Safety Regulations DS 132 to incorporate best practices and new technologies.

Types of Accidents

According to the report, three of the fatal accidents in 2024 were classified under "struck by rocks," which remains the most common cause of death in the sector. In fact, since 2000, 31% of all mining-related fatalities have been due to this type of accident, resulting in 194 worker deaths.

Two other fatalities were caused by "crushing or entrapment," two by "gas poisoning," one by "impact," and one due to a "motor vehicle accident."

The latter category, according to the analysis, has been responsible for 23% of all fatal accidents in large- and medium-scale mining since 2000, accounting for 73 deaths.

Sectoral Permit Reform Resumes Discussion in the Senate with a Goal of Concluding Next Week

After the summer recess, the Economy Committee continued processing the bill.

**Diario Financiero. March 12, 2025.
By Amanda Santillán R.**

The Senate Economy Committee resumed on Tuesday the processing of the framework bill on sectoral authorizations, which is currently in its second constitutional stage.

During the session, senators requested that the Executive renew the immediate discussion status of the initiative, aiming for it to conclude its committee review next Tuesday and proceed to its next step in the Finance Committee and the Senate floor.

However, Senator and Economy Committee Chairman Rojo Edwards warned that four key differences between the government and legislators remain unresolved regarding sworn declarations, strict deadlines, regulatory stability, and parallel processing.

These four points are part of the agreement protocol signed in December between the Executive and senators to introduce modifications to the bill and expedite its passage.

"These are the key points that those of us who signed the agreement—including the present senators and the Ministry of Economy—need to fully address during discussions this week so that we can effectively conclude all negotiations by Tuesday," Edwards stated.

During the session, an ad referendum amendment was also approved, covering 15 articles emphasizing the ongoing reform of the sectoral permit system.

"The main change is a proposal that much more precisely reflects the fact that this is a highly specific continuous improvement initiative that focuses solely on sectoral authorizations," explained Minister of Economy Nicolás Grau.

The minister added, "We have resolved this potential overlap with the public policy quality agency, in addition to strengthening the role of the office, which is also part of various points in the agreement."

He further clarified that the first evaluation of the reform will take place three years after its implementation, followed by periodic reviews every five years.

89.8% of Mining Companies Have a Gender Policy

WOMEN. Cochilco Released a Study.

El Mercurio de Antofagasta. March 12, 2025.

Cochilco has released the study "Representation of Women in the Mining Sector in Chile," which reflects a significant commitment by mining companies in Chile to implementing gender policies, although progress varies across different areas.

The majority of companies (89.8%) report having policies, objectives, or goals related to gender, diversity, and inclusion, and 83.7% actively participate in the Women and Mining Roundtable, an indicator of sector-wide collaboration.

There is also a high proportion of companies that have implemented flexible work policies and benefits for mothers and fathers, reaching 93.8%. Additionally, 95.7% state that they have internal and external communication strategies free from gender bias. However, only 12.5% of companies are certified under the NCh 3262 standard, which establishes guidelines for gender equality and work-life balance, suggesting a key area for improvement in standardization and formalization of gender commitments.

Regarding specific support mechanisms, 81.3% of companies have pay equity policies, while 97.9% have implemented reporting channels for workplace harassment and sexual harassment. However, areas such as the inclusion of a gender perspective in the National Policy on Occupational Safety and Health, and the use of platforms like [indic@igualdad](#) (0% adoption), show low adoption rates. Additionally, only 34.7% of companies report having policies for retaining female talent.

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Authorities Urged to Intervene Over Wave of Thefts at Mining Sites

ORGANIZED CRIME. The Presidential Delegation is developing a public-private working group and has asked companies to improve security standards.

El Diario de Atacama. March 12, 2025.

By Dayana Muñoz Araya

Organized gangs with knowledge of mining operations have been identified by authorities as responsible for a series of thefts at mining sites in the region.

The situation concerns the industry due to the violence demonstrated against workers, the loss of prestige, and the potential impact on investments.

In this regard, the Corporation for the Development of the Atacama Region (Corproa) has requested intervention from central authorities. The Presidential Delegation is developing a working group to address these issues and has urged companies to enhance their security measures to increase control.

Recent Incident

The latest known robbery took place in the early hours of Tuesday at the Gold Fields mining site, where a group of individuals intimidated workers—one of whom was assaulted—and another had their phone stolen. After the theft, the perpetrators fled but scattered tire-puncturing spikes ("miguelitos") to prevent pursuit.

Carabineros (police) arrived at the site after being alerted by the company about the robbery. As of the close of this edition, the Atacama Investigative Police reported that "detectives from the PDI Copiapó Robbery Investigation Brigade and forensic experts from the Regional Criminalistics Laboratory are heading to the site to carry out the initial investigative procedures."

Regarding the incident at their facilities, Gold Fields stated that "all internal security protocols were immediately activated to safeguard the safety of individuals, which is our primary concern."

Corproa's Reaction

Through a statement, the corporation's president, Juan José Ronsecco, expressed concern over "a series of incidents that reveal an increasingly bold, violent, and organized criminal presence."

In the same vein, Ronsecco declared that "clearly, these are organized gangs that are seriously damaging our reputation in attracting investment and our stability. But above all, they are endangering the integrity of workers and nearby residents."

Accordingly, Corproa called on central authorities "to decide to intervene as soon as possible in the mining regions of the north to protect people's safety and the future of an industry that is key to Atacama and the country."

Furthermore, Ronsecco, representing Corproa, appealed to national authorities, stating that "public security is a responsibility of the State towards all citizens. We categorically affirm that ensuring the physical safety of individuals cannot, under any circumstances, be resolved by arming private citizens." Finally, the Corproa leader called for greater intervention "by providing regional police forces with more resources and additional measures," he concluded.

Presidential Delegate

Meanwhile, Rodrigo Illanes, the presidential delegate, stated that "we are conducting a public-private working group with the region's most important mining companies, precisely to address crime-related issues affecting the mining industry."

Regarding progress, officials indicated that they have identified that "organized criminal gangs are behind these crimes and also possess knowledge of the internal workings of the companies. In this regard, we are working collaboratively with the Public Prosecutor's Office and our police forces to investigate and dismantle them," said the authority. Finally, he emphasized that they have asked companies to improve their security standards in order to have greater internal and external control.

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"Ensuring the physical safety of individuals cannot, under any circumstances, be resolved by arming private citizens."

Juan José Ronsecco, Corproa President.

"We have requested improvements to their security standards to achieve greater control both internally and externally."

Rodrigo Illanes, Presidential Delegate of Atacama.

Oceana's Action

Supreme Court Declares Appeal Against Dominga Inadmissible

A complaint against the December decision of the First Environmental Court is blocked.

El Mercurio de Santiago. March 12, 2025.

EYN

The Supreme Court of Santiago has declared inadmissible the complaint appeal filed by the environmental organization Oceana against the ruling in favor of the Dominga project by the First Environmental Court of Antofagasta. Oceana had appealed to the highest court regarding the December 9, 2024, ruling, which annulled the second vote of the Committee of Ministers from January 2023 and required the Andes Iron mining-port project to be reviewed for a third time in the first month of this year.

"It Cannot Be Admitted"

Specifically, the Supreme Court concluded that the request by the NGO Oceana "does not meet the characteristics described in the preceding reasoning and, therefore, the appeal filed cannot be admitted for processing."

Thus, the highest court invalidated the legal action of the NGO Oceana, which sought to declare the actions of the members of the First Environmental Court as constituting "serious misconduct or abuse" when they decided to uphold the claim filed by Andes Iron against the resolution of the Committee of Ministers.

Initiatives Funded with SQM Lithium Contributions:

The H2V Projects with "Early Termination" Awarded by Corfo

Agreements with Enel Green Power, Engie, and Air Liquide show no progress. Only those with GNL Quintero and CAP remain active.

El Mercurio de Santiago. March 12, 2025.

By J. P. Palacios and E. Olivares

Various R&D projects have been financed with contributions provided by SQM Salar to Corfo as part of the obligations established in its lithium exploitation contract with the state agency for the Atacama Salt Flat.

However, a significant portion of these initiatives has been either terminated early or shows no substantial progress.

Corfo's Official Report

According to information provided by Corfo through the Transparency Law, the total amount allocated to R&D by the mining company last year reached \$18.9 million (see chart).

In the detailed information provided, \$50 million was made available for green hydrogen (H2V) initiatives. Among the selected entities were Enel Green Power, Engie, Air Liquide, GNL Quintero, and CAP.

Corfo clarified that, of these agreements, only those with GNL Quintero and CAP remain active. Meanwhile, the agreements with Enel Green Power and Engie are under "early termination request in the process of analysis." The project with Air Liquide has already been "terminated early."

"El Mercurio" requested further details from Corfo's communications department regarding the early termination of the mentioned projects, but no response was provided.

Additionally, Corfo mentioned a project related to the manufacturing and/or assembly of electrolyzers. It was noted that this call for proposals is currently closed and undergoing an evaluation process for eligibility.

Also within the scope of R&D, funding was allocated to the Chilean Institute of Clean Technologies. The awarded amount is \$137.5 million, and the selected entity is the Corporación Alta Ley. The current status confirms that the initiative's selection process has been fully completed, and the next steps involve complying with the conditions established in the selection resolution for finalizing the agreement with Corfo.

Funds Held at BancoEstado

In Corfo's response via the Transparency Law, it was specified that \$10.1 million is currently held in a dollar-denominated account at BancoEstado. These funds come from resources allocated to R&D under the specific-use category. This newspaper also requested further information from Corfo regarding the trajectory of these resources, but no response was given.

The executive director of Pivotes, Juan Francisco Galli, criticized the accumulation of these funds in the state-owned financial institution. "It does not seem financially appropriate for large amounts of public funds (\$10 million) to be sitting in a BancoEstado account without being invested or used for more socially or financially profitable public purposes," he said. Galli also emphasized the need to explain the reasons behind the early termination of H2V projects.

Funds for Communities

Regarding contributions to Indigenous communities, out of a total available amount of \$2.83 million, \$1.29 million has been allocated to the project "Highly Controlled Precision Greenhouse." These funds are designated for the Atacameña Larache community.

Statistics show that, between 2018 and 2023, communities in the Atacama Salt Flat basin have received a total of \$79.4 million from SQM Salar.

In the category of contributions to communities and the regional government, the Gore of Antofagasta received approximately \$174.8 million between 2018 and 2023 for public investment projects and \$52.3 million for productive development projects and programs.

Solar Sources Have Been Particularly Affected: **Renewable Energy Curtailment Increases After Blackout**

The restriction on the failed transmission line has led to a lower injection of clean energy into the system.

El Mercurio de Santiago. March 12, 2025.

By Catalina Muñoz-Kappes

A greater curtailment of renewable energy, particularly solar, has been observed in recent days following the massive blackout that affected the country on February 25. This is due to the restriction imposed by the National Electricity Coordinator on the Nueva Maitencillo-Nueva Pan de Azúcar transmission line, where the failure occurred.

One way to measure the renewable energy that is lost is through reductions. Claudio Espinoza, managing partner at the consultancy firm Aclai, explains that reductions show the difference between scheduled generation—that is, the expected production—and actual generation, which is the energy that was ultimately produced on a given day. These reductions can occur due to lower energy demand, variations in energy production, or, as in this case, transmission line issues.

According to information from the National Electricity Coordinator, in the days leading up to the blackout, renewable energy reductions ranged from 8.41 GWh to 18.29 GWh. However, from Friday, February 28 onward, reductions have varied between 18.26 GWh and 27.53 GWh.

In response to an official request from the Superintendence of Electricity and Fuels, the Coordinator stated:

"As of Thursday, February 27, 2025, the Coordinator's Dispatch and Control Center implemented, as a preventive measure against a possible new unexpected disconnection in both circuits of the 2x500 kV Nueva Maitencillo - Nueva Pan de Azúcar transmission line, a joint transfer control between said transmission line and its parallel 220 kV corridor to prevent propagation. The maximum levels of this control resulted in approximately 50% of the 500 kV system's transmission capacity under normal conditions."

According to a letter sent to the Coordinator on March 7, the company Atlas Renewable Energy reported observing a limitation of 1,000 MW between February 28 and March 1, 2, and 3, and a reduction to 800 MW from March 4 onward. Under normal conditions, the line transmits 1,600 MW.

Solar Generation

According to Humberto Verdejo, an academic at the University of Santiago, the largest decrease in energy injections into the electrical system has occurred in power plants that generate energy from solar sources. Comparing the energy injected into the system during the solar block on Monday, February 17, with Friday, March 7, the expert observed a decrease in generation from solar sources in northern Chile but an increase from wind farms in central Chile, as well as from thermal and hydroelectric plants.

"The section where the failure occurred is an area of the system that injects a lot of renewable energy, especially in the north. Since the energy flow moves from north to south during solar hours to take advantage of the northern photovoltaic energy, restricting transmission capacity means that renewable energy cannot be injected, leading to what can be considered an equivalent of curtailment," Verdejo explains.

"It's not that renewable energy is being restricted, but rather that transmission capacity is being limited," he adds.

A "Prudent" Measure

Both experts consider the National Electricity Coordinator's decision to restrict energy flow through the faulty transmission line a "prudent" measure.

"This was a massive collapse that we are all aware of. The failure study is still ongoing, the audits are not yet complete. Why would I expose myself again to the same transmission load as before the failure if I still don't know what happened?" says Espinoza, supporting the Coordinator's decision.

"Until the cause of the failure is determined and measures are taken to prevent this from happening again, I believe it is prudent for the Coordinator to restrict transmission capacity," Verdejo affirms.

Enel Begins Commercial Operation of Los Cóndores Power Plant

The 153 MW net installed capacity plant is located in the Maule Region and will inject clean energy into the National Electric System.

Pulso. March 12, 2025.

Enel Chile announced the start of commercial operations at the Los Cóndores hydroelectric power plant through its subsidiary, Enel Generación Chile. The plant, with a net installed capacity of 153 MW, is located in the Maule Region and will allow for the injection of clean energy into the National Electric System.

"This milestone allows us to close an important cycle. We have built a modern hydroelectric power plant using cutting-edge technology specifically designed for its construction. Today, we celebrate this achievement and, above all, the commitment of our company and its employees to continue contributing to the country's energy stability and well-being," said Giuseppe Turchiarelli, general manager of Enel Chile, in a statement.

María Galainena De Carlos, general manager of Enel Generación Chile, stated: "We welcome and celebrate the start of commercial operations of this new generation unit with pride because it enables us to continue being a key contributor to the development of a national energy matrix based on renewable energy. Above all, considering the various construction and engineering challenges posed by the terrain where it is located, which were successfully overcome thanks to the professionalism and dedication of all the teams involved in its development and construction."

The company reported that the construction of this plant was carried out using machinery capable of drilling 12 kilometers of rock for the creation of the adduction tunnel and the 500-meter vertical shaft, respectively. Power generation will be handled by two turbines capable of processing up to 25 m³/s and producing approximately 350 GWh per year.