



***Come Grow
With Us***

Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association

Background: A History of Mine Disasters

During the period 1900-1910 newspaper headlines told of devastating mine disasters every few weeks. Each disaster was a front-page attraction for a day or so, and then it was forgotten until the next sensational event—usually another mine disaster. Interspersed with the large mine disasters were the so-called “sniping” mine accidents that caused the death of one or two miners. During this period, the total mine fatalities of all types usually exceeded 3,000 a year, and nonfatal accidents approached 250,000 a year. From 1906-1910, inclusive, there were 84 major explosions, which took 13,288 lives.

Dr. Holmes and the Bureau of Mines

As a result of these deplorable statistics, Congress saw the urgent need to stop the excessive loss of human life in the Nation’s mines. In July 1910, the Bureau of Mines was established and Dr. Joseph A. Holmes was named as the Bureau’s first director. Dr. Holmes was not only a person of high intellect, but also a humanitarian. He established training programs at mine sites, in local communities, and at other locations where miners and their families could gather. His interest was in preserving human lives and reducing suffering, and this training helped achieve both goals.

Dr. Holmes pioneered his attack on accidents and injuries with training in first aid, rescue and recovery procedures, accident prevention, and basic mining skills. Due to the remote location of most mines, first aid was especially important. Dr. Holmes recognized that safety and health were not only issues of concern at work but also at home, during leisure activities, on the highway, or wherever a person might be. For that reason, Dr. Holmes opened up Bureau training classes to anyone interested. Since most mines were accessible by railroad, Dr. Holmes put his classroom on rails using a converted passenger car.

Founding of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association

Through the leadership of Dr. Holmes the efforts of the Bureau of Mines proved very beneficial. Recognizing that the task of continuing his philosophy was much too large for government alone to accomplish, the Bureau founded the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association in 1916. Twenty-four leading national organizations made up the original charter of incorporation. Sub-units, or chapters, were organized at each mine or in close proximity to mining and related industries. The purpose of the parent association and these chapters was to conserve lives of those working in the mines and related industries by educating individuals in hazards and work precautions and by rewarding safe-work activities. The chapters facilitated the exchange of state-of-the-art accident prevention techniques.

The Holmes Safety Association (HSA)

In 1926, the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association saw the need to initiate an independent effort to take over the function of organizing chapters. As a result, Article V of the Constitution of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association established the Holmes Safety Association to be its working arm: “The local chapters of the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association existing on March 5, 1926, and such future chapters, shall form an affiliated body known as the Holmes Safety Association.”

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association and the Holmes Safety Association become one

In 2001, the Joseph A. Holmes Association and the Holmes Safety Association become one safety organization, as Dr. Holmes originally created it in 1916.

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association and You

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association (JHSA) consists of the national council, 7 state councils and 70 district councils, and over 5,125 local chapters. State and district councils nominate individuals to serve on the JHSA Executive Committee (presently 99 persons). These nominations are reviewed, each on its own merit, and voted on at the national meeting each year. Committee members serve one-year terms, which are renewable if they are so nominated.

The JHSA Executive Committee elects a President, four Vice Presidents, and a Secretary-Treasurer each year. The President and Vice Presidents each represent one of five member groups (Management, Labor, Federal Agency, State Agency, and Supplier/Insurance/Contractor/Academia), and through a five-year rotation, each group has a representative serve as President. The Secretary-Treasurer has historically been a person working for the Federal Government since this has been an agreement from the time of original incorporation.

The National Council directs and assists state councils, state councils direct and assist district councils, and district councils direct and assist chapters and their members. A solution to any issue may be found through the network of local chapters, district councils, state councils or the national association. Members nationwide willingly share with one another to make this industry safer and accident free.

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Mission

Today, the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association effectively functions as one of the Nation’s largest, if not the largest, safety associations dedicated to the promotion of health and safety of miners, associated industries, and families of both. This is accomplished through the nonadversarial relationship of members from the association’s five member groups. Over 450,000 employees of mining and associated industries represented by JHSA strive to meet the goal of the JHSA mission statement: “Promote effective management of safety in mining and associated industries by providing a forum of government, industry, and labor to develop solutions through communications, education, and recognition of safety excellence.”

Recognition and Awards

The Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association provides recognition and awards to individuals, groups, organizations, etc., for promoting the ideals of the association. The following JHSA awards are presented at the Annual National Meeting:

- Merit Award
- 10/20/30/40 Year Active Member Award
- Safety Award
- Special recognition
- Man and Woman of the Year
- Chapter Organizing Recognition
- District Council Safety Competition Award
- Act of Heroism Award
- Ival VanHorn Activity Award
- William H. Hoover Lifetime Achievement Award
- Other special awards as approved by JHSA

In addition, many district and state councils present numerous awards on the local level.

Membership Benefits

As a member, you will receive a monthly safety bulletin containing information and articles that will aid you in your safety meetings. In addition, you will be able to interface with other safety-conscious people from other chapters at the district council meetings in your area. They can give you new ideas for improving safety and lowering compensation costs at your mine.

How to Apply for Membership

Membership is free. Your organization can become a Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association Chapter by completing a membership application and submitting it to the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association.

Mail your application request to:

Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association
P.O. Box 9375
Arlington, VA 22219
Phone: 202-693-9574
Fax: 202-693-9571

Mailing Address for New Chapter

Contact Person: _____

Phone Number: _____

Company Name:

Street/P.O. Box: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

MSHA ID Number: _____

Type of Product: _____

Type of Operation: Underground ____ Surface ____

Mill ____ Other _____

Name you would like to call the chapter being established:

Name and organization of person assisting in recruiting this application:

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____