

DMM Safety Alert:

Abandoned Pits And Quarries

In November 2015, a young woman died after she fell from the top of a highwall at an old, abandoned quarry in Giles County. Local police are investigating to determine why the woman was at the abandoned quarry and why she fell. Over the past several years, there have been numerous deaths and serious injuries from falls, drownings, and other accidents at abandoned, inactive, and active mine sites throughout the nation. These sites attract children and adults alike, who trespass on these sites to explore, hike, climb, bike, swim or do other recreational activities. Many of these sites are very visible and accessible, like the Giles County site which is located immediately next to a public road. While it is impossible to keep everyone away from these abandoned mine sites, property owners should make all reasonable efforts to warn people of the hazards that exist, many of which may not be clearly obvious. Many of the abandoned mine sites in Virginia are not regulated by The Virginia Division of Mineral Mining (DMM). Regardless, DMM recommends that owners of abandoned mine sites take the following actions:

- Install and maintain warning signs that specify the hazards associated with the site. This would include general no trespassing and danger signs around the perimeter of the property.
- Install and maintain locked gates at all road accesses to the site.
- Install and maintain fencing around the most hazardous areas.
- Inspect the site on a regular basis for signs of trespassing and vandalism.
- Involve local law enforcement to deter trespassing by arresting and prosecuting trespassers.
- Consider steps that might be taken to remove hazards, such as earth moving and grading, property clean-up, etc.



Giles County site