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**Health and safety in mineral exploration – the role  
of the Prospectors and Developers Association**

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Mineral exploration has unique health and safety issues because working conditions are complex and often in remote regions subject to extremes of weather and terrain. The industry is increasingly dominated by junior companies and small contractors, which lack the internal health and safety resources of major companies. With the recent expansion in mineral exploration there has been a significant increase in accidents and fatalities in Canada. Due to difficult access to advanced medical care while working in remote sites, minor accidents have the potential to become major issues.

The Prospectors and Developers Association recognizes that health and safety are integral parts of responsible mineral exploration (corporate social responsibility) and in 2005 formed a committee to assist industry achieve zero fatalities and to decrease accidents. For five years the PDAC committee has assessed exploration safety performance through an annual Canadian national exploration accident survey by partnering with the Association for Mineral Exploration in British Columbia (AME BC). Companies are encouraged to submit their safety records for the year, and the data is combined to create a statistical analysis of accident causes. Since the inception of the survey, the proportion of responding companies has increased rapidly resulting in improved understanding of the causes of accidents. An overview of the results of these surveys will be presented, with recommendations to improve field safety.

In addition to the survey, the PDAC has commissioned the most comprehensive 800 page global manual for exploration health and safety. The purpose, contents, and use of this manual will be briefly reviewed. Finally, the association is in the process of developing a pocket sized variant of the comprehensive manual.

The presentation is part of PDAC's attempt to improve field safety through researching incidents, publishing procedure manuals, and publicizing incident causes. The whole health and safety initiative is an integral part of PDAC's E3 Plus principles for responsible exploration, which comprises comprehensive material in the areas of community relations, environmental practice in the field, and health and safety.