

Terminology in mining

Backfill – Mine waste or rock used to support the roof after coal removal.

Cage - In a mine shaft, the device, similar to an elevator car, that is used for hoisting personnel and materials.

Crosscut - A passageway driven between the entry and its parallel air course or air courses for ventilation purposes. Also, a tunnel driven from one seam to another through or across the intervening measures; sometimes called "crosscut tunnel", or "breakthrough". In vein mining, an entry perpendicular to the vein.

Deposit - Mineral deposit or ore deposit is used to designate a natural occurrence of a useful mineral, or an ore, in sufficient extent and degree of concentration to invite exploitation.

Drift - A horizontal passage underground. A drift follows the vein, as distinguished from a crosscut that intersects it, or a level or gallery, which may do either.

Face – The exposed area of a coal bed from which coal is being extracted.

Gallery - A horizontal or a nearly horizontal underground passage, either natural or artificial.

Haulage - The horizontal transport of ore, coal, supplies, and waste. The vertical transport of the same is called hoisting.

Hoist - A drum on which hoisting rope is wound in the engine house, as the cage or skip is raised in the hoisting shaft.

Longwall Mining – One of three major underground coal mining methods currently in use. Employs a steel plow, or rotation drum, which is pulled mechanically back and forth across a face of coal that is usually several hundred feet long. The loosened coal falls onto a conveyor for removal from the mine.

Natural ventilation - Ventilation of a mine without the aid of fans or furnaces.

Overburden – Layers of soil and rock covering a coal seam. Overburden is removed prior to surface mining and replaced after the coal is taken from the seam.

Pillar - An area of coal left to support the overlying strata in a mine; sometimes left permanently to support surface structures.

Raise - A secondary or tertiary inclined opening, vertical or near-vertical opening driven upward from a level to connect with the level above, or to explore the ground for a limited distance above one level.

Room and pillar mining – A method of underground mining in which approximately half of the coal is left in place to support the roof of the active mining area. Large "pillars" are left while "rooms" of coal are extracted.

Seam - A stratum or bed of coal.

Shaft - A primary vertical or non-vertical opening through mine strata used for ventilation or drainage and/or for hoisting of personnel or materials; connects the surface with underground workings.

Shearer - A mining machine for longwall faces that uses a rotating action to "shear" the material from the face as it progresses along the face.

Shortwall – An underground mining method in which small areas are worked (15 to 150 feet) by a continuous miner in conjunction with the use of hydraulic roof supports.

Skip - A car being hoisted from a slope or shaft.

Stope: void created by extracting *ore* underground; any upward excavation made in a mine, esp. from a steeply inclined vein, to remove the ore that has been rendered accessible by the shafts and drifts

Subsidence – The gradual sinking, or sometimes abrupt collapse, of the rock and soil layers into an underground mine. Structures and surface features above the subsidence area can be affected.

Sump - The bottom of a shaft, or any other place in a mine, that is used as a collecting point for drainage water.

Waste - That rock or mineral which must be removed from a mine to keep the mining scheme practical, but which has no value.