



News Release

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U.S. Labor Department's MSHA Makes New Emergency Mine Evacuation Rules Permanent *Emergency Contact Number Established for Reporting All Mining Accidents*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today issued a final rule that requires mine operators to increase the availability of emergency breathing devices, provide improved training on the use of the devices, improve emergency evacuation and drill training, install lifelines for emergency evacuation, and require immediate notification of MSHA in the event of an accident.

“These new requirements are an integrated approach to providing proper guidance to miners and mine operators during emergency situations,” said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “The new rule adds additional protections for miners and provides them with more tools to survive a mining accident should one occur.”

Earlier this year, MSHA issued a rare emergency temporary standard (ETS) aimed at protecting miners by helping them to evacuate an underground mine in the event of an emergency. MSHA held public hearings on the ETS following its publication in the Federal Register. The process was completed with issuance of the new permanent rule today.

Other requirements of the new rule include:

- Additional self-contained self-rescue (SCSR) devices for persons in underground coal mines—in working places, on mantrips, in escapeways, and where outby crews work or travel
- Submission of a revised training plan and a revised program of instruction for improved training on SCSRs; it includes a new requirement for annual SCSR expectations training (training in smoke or simulated smoke and breathing through a realistic training unit)
- Improved quarterly emergency mine evacuation training, including a drill
- Installation of lifelines
- Additional multi-gas detectors to alert miners as to when to don SCSRs.

One of the more significant results of the new rule is the establishment of only one phone number for use in reporting mine accidents within 15 minutes after it is known an accident occurred. All mine operators, including operators of metal and non-metal mines, must call 1 (800) 746-1553 to report mining accidents within the required time limit.

Additional information, including the full text of this rule, can be found at www.msha.gov.

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