

# News Release



U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.  
Release Number 07-209-NAT

For Immediate Release  
February 08, 2007  
Contact: Amy Louviere      Dirk Fillpot  
Phone: (202) 693-9423      (202) 693-9406

## **U.S. Department of Labor's MSHA Offers Assistance on Breathable Air Requirement of MINER Act**

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today provided additional information to underground coal mine operators to help them determine the quantity of breathable air necessary to sustain trapped miners. The Program Information Bulletin (PIB), entitled "Options for Providing Post-Accident Breathable Air to Underground Coal Miners," will help operators implement Section 2 of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act of 2006.

"Providing this guidance is an important step in implementing the MINER Act and will help ensure that miners are protected should an accident occur," said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "If miners cannot evacuate a mine following an underground mine emergency, they need a safe location that maintains an adequate supply of breathable air for them to use while they await rescue."

Section 2 of the MINER Act requires that each underground coal mine operator adopt a written emergency response plan (ERP) that provides for emergency supplies of breathable air for individuals trapped underground sufficient to maintain them for a sustained period of time. The PIB suggests various methods for determining where breathable air supplies should be located and the amount of breathable air that should be available.

Options that may satisfy the breathable air requirement include: an established borehole capable of providing fresh air to a predetermined location; a 48-hour supply of breathable air, if advance contingency arrangements have been made to reliably assure that miners who cannot be rescued within 48 hours will receive additional supplies of breathable air sufficient to sustain them until rescue; a 96-hour supply of breathable air located at a predetermined location, and other methods as long as these methods provide equivalent safety protection.

Mine operators must submit the portion of their ERPs addressing breathable air not more than 30 days after February 8, 2007, the date of this PIB, and must implement it not more than 60 days after the plan is approved by MSHA. The Program Information Bulletin on breathable air is available for viewing at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).

###

---

U.S. Labor Department (DOL) releases are accessible on the Internet at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov). The information in this news release will be made available in alternate format upon request (large print, Braille, audio tape or disc) from the COAST office. Please specify which news release when placing your request. Call (202) 693-7828 or TTY (202) 693-7755. . DOL is committed to providing America's employers and employees with easy access to understandable information on how to comply with its laws and regulations. For more information, please visit [www.dol.gov/compliance](http://www.dol.gov/compliance).