

News Release



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MSHA to host third-ever international mine rescue conference and first in U.S. *Nashville meeting to be held concurrently with national coal mine rescue contest*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today announced it will host the third-ever biennial International Mine Rescue Conference at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Conference Center in Nashville, Tenn., from Aug. 29 through Sept. 1. This conference will be the first held in the United States.

“We are honored to host the third International Mine Rescue Conference for mining professionals from around the world who share MSHA’s goal of efficient, safe and successful mine rescue,” said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “The conference provides a unique opportunity for American mine rescue experts and their international counterparts to discuss mine rescue techniques and other issues relevant to the enhanced safety and health of working miners everywhere.”

The theme of the four-day event is “Effective Mine Emergency Operations.” Participants will discuss emergency command center operations, responsibilities during such operations, the effects of stress and fatigue on emergency decision-making, and on-site management and mobilization of mine rescue teams. An underground mine tour is scheduled, as well.

The conference will coincide with the biennial National Coal Mine Rescue, First Aid and Bench Competition. Mine rescue contests are mock mine emergencies in which rescue teams battle simulated fires, floods or roof falls to rescue their trapped colleagues underground. These teams undergo rigorous training throughout the year to sharpen skills that, should they ever need to use them, could save lives.

The first International Mine Rescue Conference was held in South Africa in October 2003 and the second in Sydney, Australia, in November 2005. More than 100 delegates attended the latter meeting, representing Australia, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, India, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and Romania, among other countries.

On May 29, 2001, international mine rescue representatives held a meeting in Bytom, Poland, and agreed to appoint an International Mine Rescue Body. The body’s primary objective is to promote international mine rescue operations and cooperation. The group also agreed that each participating country would designate a coordinator to attend international meetings to be held every two years in a different nation.

For more information about the conference, visit MSHA’s Web site at www.msha.gov or call (202) 693-9470.

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