

News Release



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Mine Safety and Health Administration appoints director for newly established Office of Accountability *New division will increase oversight of enforcement programs*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today announced the selection of the agency’s first director of the newly established Office of Accountability.

Charles Thomas, MSHA’s chief of health in the Office of Coal Mine Safety and Health, will head up the new division, which will conduct oversight assessments of agency enforcement efforts, and ensure the implementation of corrective actions recommended following internal reviews. The outcome of internal reviews into the fatalities at the Sago, Aracoma and Darby mines in part prompted the establishment of this office.

“Charlie and the compliance specialists who will be assisting him are going to be spending a lot of their time in the field -- at mines as well as MSHA offices around the country,” said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “As the director of the Office of Accountability, Charlie will focus on ensuring that MSHA enforcement across the nation is diligent, vigorous and conducted with the strictest regard for miners’ safety.”

Thomas, a native of Fairmont, W.Va., is a 16-year veteran of the agency, having worked in supervisory positions in the roof control and electrical divisions, and as a field office supervisor and acting district manager. Thomas has participated in four fatal accident investigations and was a member of MSHA’s mine rescue team.

The Office of Accountability was established to provide greater focus and oversight in ensuring that MSHA’s policies, enforcement procedures and guidance are being complied with consistently and that the agency is accomplishing its mission-critical activities. In his capacity as director, Thomas will analyze mining data, conduct field audits, and recommend and monitor corrective actions.

As director of the Office of Accountability, Thomas will report directly to the assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health, and he will be supported by two compliance specialists based out of two separate field offices of Coal Mine Safety and Health, and Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health. All three positions will require extensive travel to MSHA district and field offices, as well as mining operations nationwide.

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