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U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Release Number: 12-2000-NAT

For Immediate Release

Oct. 2, 2012

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MSHA special investigators undergo training by FBI

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that the FBI Laboratory’s Evidence Response Team Unit is facilitating a two-week course on conducting accident investigations for 18 of the agency’s accident investigators and special investigators. The pilot training program began Sept. 24 and will continue through Oct. 5 at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beaver, W.Va.

The training covers securing an accident scene, photographing and sketching, collecting and packaging evidence, conducting interviews, dealing with false or altered records, and releasing the scene.

“This training will help improve MSHA investigators’ skills and knowledge to conduct investigations under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 – including willful violations of the Mine Act – as well as accident investigations,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “In the event an accident investigation identifies possible criminal activities, MSHA’s investigators will be better prepared to interact with the Department of Justice.”

“MSHA’s accident investigation team has a very difficult and challenging job,” said FBI Laboratory Director D. Christian Hassell. “Its commitment to ensuring the integrity of the evidence, collected during the course of their investigations, is commendable. The FBI is pleased to work with this group of dedicated professionals, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with MSHA as the agency enhances its training program.”

The minimum requirements to become a special investigator include being an authorized representative of the secretary of labor with authority to conduct inspections or having the authorization for right of entry to mining operations, as well as the completion of five weeks of formal classroom training. Credentials also may be obtained through an on-the-job training program.

A lead accident investigator must be an authorized representative and is required to complete 21 weeks of classroom training at the academy, combined with extensive field training and evaluation.

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