

News Release



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Independent team of occupational safety experts to examine MSHA's internal review following explosion at Upper Big Branch Mine

WASHINGTON – At the U.S. Department of Labor's request, an independent team of occupational safety experts will examine the process and outcomes of the Mine Safety and Health Administration's internal review in the wake of the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine. Both the MSHA internal review and the independent analysis of that review will be made public. This independent assessment is aimed at assuring transparency and accountability, and will evaluate the policy, process and outcomes of MSHA's internal review.

By policy, MSHA is required to review its own actions relating to the mine prior to the explosion. To ensure the integrity of that process, the secretary of labor has asked the director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Dr. John Howard, to identify a team with relevant experience to provide an independent analysis of MSHA's internal review.

"I am confident that MSHA will conduct a thorough and complete review of the actions of the mine operator and its own actions at the Upper Big Branch Mine," noted Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. "To ensure accountability, I've asked for an outside team to review the policy, process and substance of MSHA's internal review. This independent evaluation will help ensure that we're doing everything we can to protect the health and safety of America's miners."

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