

**January 22, 2007**

In the matter of:  
Ohio County Coal Company  
Freedom Mine  
I.D. No. 15-17587

Petition for Modification  
  
Docket No. M-2006-037-C

PROPOSED DECISION AND ORDER

On May 23, 2006, a petition was filed seeking a modification of the application of 30 CFR 75.1101-1(b) to Petitioner's Freedom Mine, located in Henderson County, Kentucky. Petitioner proposes to conduct weekly examinations and functional testing of the deluge fire suppression systems in lieu of the blow-off dust covers for nozzles required by the standard. The Petitioner alleges that the alternative method outlined in the petition will, at all times, guarantee no less than the same measure of protection afforded by the standard.

MSHA personnel conducted an investigation of the petition and filed a report of their findings with the Administrator for Coal Mine Safety and Health. After a careful review of the entire record, including the petition and MSHA's investigative report, this Proposed Decision and Order is issued.

Finding of Fact and Conclusion of Law

The proposed alternative method, as amended by MSHA, will at all times provide the same measure of protection to the miners as afforded the miners under 30 CFR 75.1101-1(b).

On the basis of the petition and the findings of MSHA's investigation, Ohio County Coal Company is granted a modification of the application of 30 CFR 75.1101-1(b) to its Freedom Mine.

ORDER

Wherefore, pursuant to the authority delegated by the Secretary of Labor to the Administrator for Coal Mine Safety and Health, and pursuant to Section 101(c) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, 30 U.S.C., Sec. 811(c), it is ordered that Ohio County Coal Company's Petition for Modification of the application of 30 CFR 75.1101-1(b) to the Freedom Mine is hereby:

GRANTED, for the deluge-type water spray systems installed at belt-conveyor drives in lieu of blow-off dust covers for nozzles, conditioned upon compliance with the following terms and conditions:

1. Once every 7 days, a person trained in the procedures for testing the deluge-type water spray fire suppression systems utilized at each belt drive shall:
  - (a) Conduct a visual examination of each of the deluge-type water spray fire suppression systems.
  - (b) Conduct a functional test of the deluge-type water spray fire suppression systems by actuating the system and observing its performance.
  - (c) Record the results of the examination and functional test in a book maintained on the surface for that purpose. The record shall be made available to authorized representatives of the Secretary, and be retained at the mine for one year.
2. A clogged nozzle or any other malfunction detected as a result of the weekly examination and functional test shall be corrected immediately.
3. The procedures used to perform the functional test shall be posted at or near each belt drive that utilizes a deluge-type water spray fire suppression system.
4. Within 60 days after this Proposed Decision and Order becomes final, the Petitioner shall submit proposed revisions for its approved 30 CFR Part 48 training plan to the Coal Mine Safety and Health District Manager. These proposed revisions shall specify the procedures used to conduct the weekly functional test and the initial and refresher training regarding the terms and conditions specified by the Proposed Decision and Order.

Any party to this action desiring a hearing on this matter must file in accordance with 30 CFR 44.14, within 30 days. The

request for hearing must be filed with the Administrator for Coal Mine Safety and Health, 1100 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22209-3939.

If a hearing is requested, the request shall contain a concise summary of position on the issues of fact or law desired to be raised by the party requesting the hearing, including specific objections to the proposed decision.

A party other than Petitioner who has requested a hearing shall also comment upon all issues of fact or law presented in the petition and any party to this action requesting a hearing may indicate a desired hearing site. If no request for a hearing is filed within 30 days after service thereof, the Decision and Order will become final and must be posted by the operator on the mine bulletin board at the mine.

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Melinda Pon  
Acting, Deputy Administrator for  
Coal Mine Safety and Health