

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**Mine Safety and Health Administration****Proposed Information Collection Request Submitted for Public Comment and Recommendations; Records of Preshift and Onshift Inspections of Slope and Shaft Areas****ACTION:** Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a preclearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA95) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed.

DATES: Submit comments on or before August 28, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Brenda C. Teaster, Acting Chief, Records Management Division, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Room 709A, Arlington, VA 22203-1984. Commenters are encouraged to send their comments on a computer disk, or via E-mail to bcteaster@msha.gov, along with an original printed copy. Ms. Teaster can be reached at (703) 235-1470 (voice), or (703) 235-1563 (facsimile).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brenda C. Teaster, Acting Chief, Records Management Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration, Room 709A, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203-1984. Ms Teaster can be reached at bcteaster@msha.gov (Internet E-mail), (703) 235-1470 (voice), or (703) 235-1563 (facsimile).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Background**

The sinking of slopes and shafts is a particularly hazardous operation where conditions change drastically in short periods of time. Explosive methane and other harmful gases can be expected to infiltrate the work environment at any time. The working environment is typically a confined area in close proximity to moving equipment. Mandatory safety standard 30 CFR 77.1901 requires coal mine operators to conduct examinations of slope and shaft

areas for hazardous conditions, including tests for methane and oxygen deficiency, within 90 minutes before each shift and once during each shift, and before and after blasting. The surface area surrounding each slope and shaft is also required to be inspected for hazards.

The standard also requires that a record be kept of the results of the inspections. The record consists of a description of any hazardous condition found and the corrective action taken to abate it. The record is necessary to ensure that the inspections and tests are conducted in a timely fashion and that corrective action is taken when hazardous conditions are identified. The record is maintained at the mine site for the duration of the operation.

II. Desired Focus of Comments

Currently, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed extension of the information collection related to the Records of Preshift and Onshift Inspections of Slope and Shaft Areas. (Pertains to slope and shaft sinking operations at coal mines.) MSHA is particularly interested in comments which:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

A copy of the proposed information collection request may be viewed on the Internet by accessing the MSHA Home Page (<http://www.msha.gov>) and selecting "Statutory and Regulatory Information" then "Paperwork Reduction Act submission (<http://www.msha.gov/regspwork.htm>)", or by contacting the employee listed above in the *For Further Information Contact* section of this notice for a hard copy.

III. Current Actions

MSHA proposes to continue the information collection requirement related to records of preshift and onshift inspections of slope and shaft areas for an additional 3 years. MSHA believes that eliminating this requirement would expose miners to unnecessary risk of injury or death.

The records are used by slope and shaft supervisors and employees, State mine inspectors, and Federal mine inspectors. The records show that the examinations and tests were conducted and give insight into the hazardous conditions that have been encountered and those that may be encountered. The records of inspections greatly assist those who use them in making decisions that will ultimately affect the safety and health of slope and shaft sinking employees.

Type of Review: Extension.

Agency: Mine Safety and Health Administration.

Title: Records of Preshift and Onshift Inspections of Slope and Shaft Areas.

OMB Number: 1219-0082.

Recordkeeping: Records are required to be kept for the duration of the operation.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit institutions.

Cite/Reference/Form/etc: 30 CFR 77.1901.

Total Respondents: 35.

Frequency: Twice per shift.

Total Responses: 11,858.

Average Time per Response: 1.25 hours.

Estimated Total Burden Hours: 14,823 hours.

Total Burden Cost (capital/startup): \$0.

Total Burden Cost (operating/maintaining): \$0.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 22, 2000.

Brenda C. Teaster,

Acting Chief, Records Management Division.
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