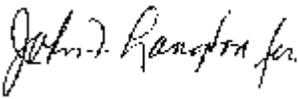


ISSUE DATE: 10/14/03

PROGRAM INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. P03-26

FROM: RAY McKINNEY   
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SUBJECT: Compliance Requirements for Non-Permissible Electric Submersible  
Dewatering Pumps Installed in Sealed Areas, Return Air Courses or  
Bleeder Entries in Underground Coal Mines

### **Scope**

This Program Information Bulletin (PIB) affects underground coal mine operators, miners' representatives, and Coal Mine Safety and Health (CMS&H) personnel.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform underground coal mine operators, miners' representatives, and Coal Mine Safety and Health (CMS&H) personnel about the Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) application of Title 30, Code of Federal Regulations (30 CFR) Sections 75.507, 75.507-1 and Part 44 (Rules and Practice for Petition for Modification of Mandatory Safety Standards) to non-permissible electric submersible dewatering pumps used in worked-out sealed areas or return or bleeder entries.

### **Information**

MSHA's Sections 30 CFR 75.507 and 75.507-1 address the locations in underground coal mines where permissible electric equipment is required. Section 75.507 provides that "except where permissible power-connection units are used, all power-connection points outby the last open crosscut shall be in intake air." Section 75.507-1(a) further provides that "all electric equipment, other than power-connection points, used in return air outby the last open crosscut...shall be permissible." Return air, for the purpose of this section, means air that has been used to ventilate any working face in a coal-producing section or pillared area, or air that has been used to ventilate any working face if such air is directed away from the immediate return and would include

the air contained in worked-out sealed areas. The intent of these Sections is to prevent explosions and mine fires from the use of electric equipment and components that are non-permissible or non-intrinsically safe in return air or the environment contained in worked-out sealed areas.

MSHA recognizes the need for installing submersible dewatering pumps in worked-out sealed areas, return air courses or bleeder entries to reduce water levels that disrupt ventilation or develop behind sealed areas. Reducing the water levels lessens the potential for ventilation disruption or inundating or flooding the mine due to a seal being crushed or blown out. MSHA has allowed non-permissible submersible dewatering pumps to be installed in worked-out sealed areas, return air courses or bleeder entries under special terms and conditions granted in a petition for modification that limit a fire or explosion hazard. Non-permissible electric submersible dewatering pumps installed and used in worked-out sealed areas, return air courses or bleeder entries without a granted petition for modification to allow their use are not in compliance with the standard, and appropriate enforcement action will be taken. A petition for modification is not necessary for the use of permissible, air driven or oil well sucker type dewatering pumps installed in these areas because they do not present a fire or explosion hazard.

### **Background**

This bulletin clarifies the compliance responsibilities of underground coal mine operators with 30 CFR Sections 75.507, 75.507-1, and 30 CFR Part 44. Some mine operators have been using non-permissible electric submersible dewatering pumps in worked-out sealed areas, return air courses or bleeder entries without a petition for modification.

### **Authority**

30 CFR Parts 75.507, 75.507-1 and 30 CFR Part 44.

### **Issuing Office and Contact Person**

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### **Internet Availability**

This information bulletin may be viewed on the Internet by accessing MSHA's home page at <http://www.msha.gov>, choosing "Rules & Regs" and "Compliance Assistance Information."

### **Distribution**

Coal and All Volume Program Policy Manual Holders  
Underground Coal Mine Operators

## Special Interest Groups