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(Reissue of I10-V-14)

PROCEDURE INSTRUCTION LETTER NO. I12-V-13

FROM: KEVIN G. STRICKLIN   
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Coal Mine Safety and Health

SUBJECT: Reissue of I10-V-14 - Maintaining Face Ventilation Control Devices

**Scope**

This Procedure Instruction Letter (PIL) applies to Coal Mine Safety and Health (CMS&H) District Managers, Supervisors, Specialists, and Inspectors.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this PIL is to provide instruction for district personnel regarding the requirements of MSHA's standards related to maintenance of face ventilation control devices.

**Procedure Instructions**

Face ventilation controls are a critical feature for providing underground coal miners with reliable ventilation. Failure to maintain controls or make prompt repairs to restore ventilation places miners' safety and health at risk due to an increased risk of a methane ignition and elevated respirable dust. Moreover, most miners on a working section do not have a means of measuring air quantities.

MSHA's standard at 30 C.F.R. § 75.330 (a) requires brattice cloth, ventilation tubing, and other face ventilation control devices to be made of flame-resistant material approved by MSHA. In addition, 30 C.F.R. § 75.330(b)(1), requires that face ventilation control devices be used to provide ventilation at each working face from which coal is being cut, mined, drilled for blasting, or loaded, and at other working faces as specified in the mine's approved ventilation plan, such as in locations where roof bolting is being conducted or idle places. Mine operators must ensure that face ventilation devices are used to effectively direct air where miners are working to dilute, render harmless, and to carry away flammable, explosive, noxious, and harmful gases, dusts, smoke, and fumes from areas where miners work.

Section 75.330(b)(2) requires ventilation control devices to be maintained at a distance not to exceed 10 feet from the area of deepest penetration to which any portion of the face has been advanced unless an alternative distance is specified in an approved ventilation plan. The alternative distance requirement must be effective in maintaining

concentrations of respirable dust, methane, and other harmful gases at safe levels, as required by the applicable MSHA standards.

Under 30 C.F.R § 75.330(c), when line brattice or any other face ventilation control device is damaged to an extent that ventilation of the working face is inadequate, production activities in the working place are required to cease until necessary repairs are made and adequate ventilation is restored.

In addition, when inspectors are present on working sections they should take air quantity measurements and assure that the face ventilation control devices are installed and maintained in accordance with the approved ventilation plan under 30 C.F.R. § 370(a)(1). They should also discuss with section personnel the importance of maintaining face ventilation controls in accordance with the approved ventilation plan.

### **Background**

Providing sufficient air quantity in an underground mine is the principal means of ensuring that flammable, explosive, noxious, and harmful gases, dusts, smoke, and fumes are continuously diluted, rendered harmless, and carried away, as required by Section 303 of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977. It is essential to miners' safety and health that all ventilation controls are properly installed and maintained to provide sufficient air quantity. Insufficient air quantity allows methane and dust to accumulate, potentially resulting in a mine fire or explosion.

### **Authority**

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.; and 30 C.F.R. § 75.730.

### **Internet Availability**

This PIL may be viewed on the Internet by accessing the MSHA home page ([www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov)) choosing "Compliance Info" and "Procedure Instruction Letters."

### **Filing Instructions**

This instruction letter should be filed behind the tab marked "Procedure Instruction Letters" in the binder for Program Policy Handbooks and Procedure Instruction Letters.

### **Issuing Office and Contact Persons**

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### **Distribution**

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