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PROGRAM POLICY LETTER NO. P11-V-05

FROM:

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SUBJECT:

Check In - Check Out System

Scope

This Program Policy Letter (PPL) is intended for underground coal mine operators, miners and miners' representatives, independent contractors, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enforcement personnel, and other parties who work or travel in underground coal mines.

Purpose

The purpose of this PPL is to review, clarify and provide guidance under Title 30, Code of Federal Regulations (30 C.F.R.) § 75.1715, "Identification check system".

Policy

After June 15, 2009, the use of a dispatcher in lieu of electronic tracking was discontinued, and all Emergency Response Plans (ERP) were required to provide an electronic tracking system permitting surface personnel to determine the location of any persons underground. As a result, in order to also comply with 30 C.F.R. § 75.1715, the identification number on the miner's belt and the electronic tracking system number must be identical. This number will allow for accurate, cross-referenced information, which can quickly and easily identify all miners working underground.

Other persons, such as visitors, vendors, short-term maintenance or service workers, who travel underground and are not employees of the mine operator, are also required to comply with the ERP's electronic tracking system procedures.

Some mines use an electronic scanning device to determine when miners clock in at work and when they clock out. These systems are generally used to determine payroll hours and do not correspond directly with a miner's underground work assignment. For this reason, these devices cannot be used to comply with 30 C.F.R. § 75.1715.

Background

Each operator of an underground coal mine is required to establish a check-in and check-out system that will provide a positive identification for each person who travels underground. For decades, this system typically included a tag (brass or other rust-resistant metal) that was attached to a miner's belt and a corresponding identical tag on a check-in/check-out board. This was the simplest and most reliable method of determining who was underground. Following the passage of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act), electronic tracking has progressed to provide positive identification of miners underground.

Currently, there are communication and tracking systems which are approved for underground mines. A list can be reviewed by accessing the MSHA web site at: <http://www.msha.gov/techsupp/PEDLocating/CommoandTrackingMINERActCompliant.pdf>

Authority

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.; 30 C.F.R. § 75.1715.

Internet Availability

This PPL may be viewed on the Internet by accessing MSHA home page (<http://www.msha.gov>) and then choosing Statutory and Regulatory Information and Compliance Assistance Information.

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