

News Release



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MSHA announces final rule on coal mine dust sampling devices

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Mine Safety and Health Administration has announced the publication of a final rule in the *Federal Register* revising requirements that MSHA and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health use to approve sampling devices for monitoring miner exposure to respirable coal mine dust. The final rule updates approval requirements for the existing “coal mine dust personal sampler unit” to reflect improvements in this sampler over the past 15 years. The rule also establishes criteria for approval of a new type of technology, the “continuous personal dust monitor,” which is worn by the miner and will report real-time dust exposure levels continuously during the shift.

Key features of the final rule include the following:

- Provides for MSHA approval of sampling devices for intrinsic safety and NIOSH approval for performance.
- Revises design specifications for the existing CMDPSU to reflect voluntary improvements made in the past 15 years, including reduction in size and weight, longer battery life, continuous flow and more tamper-resistant features.
- Establishes new requirements for approval of CPDMs, which will allow the operator to monitor dust levels in real-time and to immediately take corrective action to prevent overexposures.
- Establishes performance criteria to allow any instrument manufacturer to produce a continuous real-time dust exposure monitor.

“The final rule upgrades the approval requirements for the existing dust sampler that has been in use since passage of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. It allows the approval of a new and revolutionary continuous personal dust monitor that, for the first time, allows for continuous monitoring in real time of the coal mine dust that miners breathe,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “Most importantly,” he added, “the new CPDM device is a tool that will help wipe out the black lung disease that has plagued miners for over a century, claiming tens of thousands of lives.”

The development of the unique CPDM sampling device was the product of a 12-year partnership and commitment involving MSHA, NIOSH, labor, management and other stakeholders. MSHA is now considering the best ways to use the CPDM device to protect miners from unhealthy coal mine dusts.

The final rule does not address compliance-related issues regarding the CPDM, such as how the unit will be used, who would be required to wear it and when. The use of the CPDM will be addressed in a future rulemaking.

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