



U. S. Department of Labor MSHA's Accident Prevention Safety Idea



Miner in Distress Alert

A classic TV commercial shows an elderly lady home alone falling down stairs. Unable to move, she presses a button on a small device around her neck and says “I’ve fallen, and I can’t get up!” A voice comes back to say “Don’t worry. Help is on the way.”



A similar “miner in distress” call feature is available on many communication and tracking systems including portable radios carried by many miners. Miners have been injured, unable to summon help, and were not found for an extended time. This feature is designed to improve emergency response should a miner working alone or out of sight of other miners become incapacitated or entrapped and require immediate assistance.

For the “miner in distress” feature to work, the miner must be within a wireless coverage area. If a miner is carrying a handheld radio and is involved in an accident, there is a chance that the radio could be dropped and not be within arms reach of the person. Police and fire fighters position the activation button on a vest or in the chest area. The “miner in distress” feature is ineffective if the activation button is out of reach of the miner.

Once the system is deployed at the mine, training should be provided to miners on the proper location of the activation button and how to respond to a “miner in distress” call.

If you have a tip you would like to pass on, you can e-mail it
to zz-MSHA-MinersTips@dol.gov.

If your tip is selected, you will receive credit in this space.

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