

**U.S. Department of Labor**  
**Mine Safety and Health Administration**  
Protecting Miners' Safety and Health Since 1978

**Safety Alert**  
**Maintenance of Seals**

30 CFR 75.337(a) requires mine operators to maintain and repair seals to protect miners from hazards of sealed areas. This regulation addresses non-structural repair related to general maintenance, including excessive air leakage through and around seals; repair of minor cracks; spalling of seal coating; water drainage systems; and sampling pipes. Seals in need of structural repairs must be replaced since they no longer serve their intended purpose.



**BEST PRACTICES**

- All seals should be properly installed and maintained.
- The roof, floor and ribs around seals should be maintained free of openings and/or leakage
- Train employees in proper installation procedures.
- Gas sampling tubes should be installed as per the seal plan.
- Maintain areas around seals free of water so that the entire face of the seal can be examined including the floor/seal interface.
- Consider the lowest elevation and install a sufficient number of water drainage systems for each set of seals to prevent water from being impounded behind the seal.
- A seal should not exceed the maximum number of water drainage pipes through them as prescribed in the approved plan. If additional pipes are needed they can be added to an adjacent seal in that set.
- Install non-conductive water drainage pipes with sufficient strength that are consistent with that of the seal. See link for more information <http://arlweb.msha.gov/Alerts/PVC%20Safety%20Alert.pdf>
- Never drill through a seal to drain water as the structural integrity will be compromised. In addition, the atmosphere behind 120 psi seals is unknown.
- Evaluate the area to be sealed for current or future water inflows to determine whether a pump should be installed.



**REMEMBER:**  
Safety depends upon what you  
DO or DON'T DO.