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Safety Improvement Technologies for Mobile Equipment at Surface Mines, and for Belt Conveyors at Surface and Underground Mines.

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Safety Improvement Technologies for Mobile Equipment at Surface Mines, and for Belt Conveyors at Surface and Underground Mines.

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Comment from Elisabeth Rademan, NA

Submitter Information

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General Comment

I am a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying sociology. I consider myself to be a stakeholder in this regulation, because I am concerned about the safety of miners. I personally always wear a seatbelt when driving or riding in a car, because I know that it is one of the best ways to protect myself in an accident. I am deeply invested in encouraging other people to wear seatbelts because they save lives, and this is a concern that clearly also applies to miners. I believe that a combination of approaches to mobile equipment safety is necessary to fully protect miners.

A.1. One advantage of a seatbelt interlock system is that it requires the operator of the machine to make the conscientious choice to buckle their seatbelt. Without putting on the seatbelt, the machine wont start. This is positive thing, because it means that miners cannot be driving into a dangerous situation without taking the proper precautions. They are literally not able to ignore the safety protocol. By ensuring that everyone starts out by wearing a seatbelt, this measure would protect more miners from otherwise potentially fatal injuries. One potential downside to a seatbelt interlock system is that if a vehicle needed to be moved quickly in an emergency, the operator may not have time to put on their seatbelt, but they would not be able to move the vehicle until doing so.

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A.5. Warning devices are advantageous because instead of forcing operators to wear seatbelts, they encourage operators to do so. People like to feel like they are in control of their actions, and don't want to be forced to do it. While many people find warning devices to be annoying, that is, to a certain extent, the point of them. Warning devices can be cheaper than interlock systems, and they work without shutting the whole machine down.

F.20. Training should be effectively utilized to encourage miners to wear seatbelts while operating all sorts of mobile equipment. While large group training is important, it is also important for people to feel like they have a personal stake in the matter. A lot of people don't realize that fatal injuries could happen to them, because they feel in control of the situation. One way to address something like this would be to have a couple of individuals working at a site who are invested in wearing seatbelts to encourage their peers to do the same. Instead of coming from an authority above you telling you to wear a seatbelt, it is coming from someone concerned about your safety. It is easier to see the benefits of wearing a seatbelt, because you see that someone else is concerned about actual threats to their safety, instead of it just being a hypothetical dangerous situation.