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PROGRAM INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. P11-48

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SUBJECT: Reissue of PIB No. P07-21, Clarification of Requirements for Conveyor Belt System Start-Up Warnings on Conveyor Belt Systems which Start Automatically

Scope

Metal and Nonmetal mine operators, coal mine operators, miners and miners' representatives, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enforcement personnel, and other interested parties should have this information.

Purpose

The purpose of this Program Information Bulletin (PIB) is to reissue PIB No. P07-21 previously issued on August 10, 2007. This PIB applied only to metal and nonmetal mines. The PIB provided information on MSHA's requirements for start-up warnings for both manually operated and automatically operated conveyor belt systems at metal and nonmetal surface and underground mining locations. This reissued PIB would be applicable to metal and nonmetal and surface coal mines. The reissued PIB provides additional information on the visual checks, or visible or audible warnings required prior to starting a conveyor and also include information regarding conveyor systems at surface locations of coal mines.

Information

Title 30 Code of Federal Regulations (30 C.F.R.) § 56.14201 applies to conveyor systems at all surface metal and nonmetal mines, and 30 C.F.R. § 57.14201 applies to conveyor systems at all underground metal and nonmetal mines and 30 C.F.R. § 77.1607(bb) applies to conveyor systems at surface locations of coal mines. When the entire length of a conveyor is visible from the starting switch, these standards require that the conveyor operator visually check to make certain that all miners are in the clear before starting the conveyor. However, when the entire length of the conveyor is not visible from the starting switch, these standards require that a system which provides a visible or audible warning be installed and used to warn miners that the conveyor will be started. Sections 56.14201(b) and 57.14201(b) also require that within 30 seconds after the warning is given, the conveyor belt must be started or a second warning must be given.

Sections 56.14201, 57.14201 and 77.1607(bb) apply to conveyor belt systems that are operated manually and to conveyor systems that are operated automatically, including conveyors, that once started, are capable of automatic intermittent operations. MSHA enforcement personnel inspect all conveyor systems to determine compliance with 30 C.F.R. §§ 56.14201, 57.14201 and 77.1607(bb).

Conveyors capable of automatic start-up and/or automatic intermittent operations can present hazards to miners working in the area. Therefore, conveyors capable of automatic start-up and/or automatic intermittent operations that have ceased motion must have a visual check or provide a visible or audible warning prior to restarting the conveyor to meet the intent of the standard.

Conveyors that may be operated independently from other conveyors must meet the same requirements. When the entire length of a conveyor is visible from the starting switch, the conveyor operator must visually check to make certain that all persons are in the clear before starting the conveyor. When the entire length of the conveyor is not visible from the starting switch, the system must provide a visible or audible warning prior to starting. Where a conveyor has multiple start switches, the requirements apply to each location where there is a start switch capable of starting the conveyor.

Conveyor belt systems with automatic start-up and/or automatic intermittent operations can also present hazards to miners working in underground coal mines. Therefore, training to miners working in these areas should be given to stress the importance of staying clear of the conveyor belt system or locking and tagging out when staying clear is not possible.

Additional questions on 30 C.F.R. §§ 56.14201, 57.14201 or 77.1607(bb) regarding manually or automatically operated conveyor belt systems should be directed to the appropriate MSHA District Manager for clarification.

Background

As a result of technological advancements in conveyor belt systems, questions were raised as to whether conveyor belt systems that start automatically are required to comply with 30 C.F.R. §§ 56.14201, 57.14201 or 77.1607(bb).

Authority

Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq. and 30 C.F.R. §§ 56.14201, 57.14201 or 77.1607(bb), Conveyor start-up warnings.

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Internet Availability

This PIB may be viewed on MSHA's home page (www.msha.gov) by choosing "Compliance Info" and "Program Information Bulletin."

Distribution

MSHA Program Policy Manual Holders
Miners' Representatives
Metal and Nonmetal Mine Operators
Special Interest Groups