

ISSUE DATE: 03/21/2012  
LAST VALIDATED: 03/31/2022

PROGRAM INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. P12-05

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Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health

SUBJECT: Reissue of P07-21 - Clarification of Requirements of Conveyor Start-Up Warnings for 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201

**Scope**

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

**Purpose**

MSHA is issuing this Program Information Bulletin (PIB) to emphasize to the metal and nonmetal mining industry the requirements for conveyor start-up warnings involving both manually-operated and automatically operated conveyor belt systems at surface and underground mining locations.

**Information**

Title 30 Code of Federal Regulations (30 CFR) § 56.14201, which applies to conveyor systems at all surface metal and nonmetal mines and 30 CFR § 57.14201, which applies to conveyor systems at all underground metal and nonmetal mines, require that conveyor operators either: (a) visually check to make certain all persons are in the clear before starting a conveyor that is visible for its entire length from the starting switch; or (b) provide a visual or audible warning within 30 seconds before starting a conveyor that is not visible for its entire length from the starting switch.

MSHA interprets 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201 to apply to conveyors that are operated manually and to conveyors that are operated automatically, including automatic systems controlled by a computer, such as a programmable logic controller. Thus, MSHA enforcement personnel will inspect all automatically operated conveyors to determine compliance with 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201.

Prior to belt motion occurring, automatically operated conveyor systems are incapable of recognizing whether all persons are in the clear along the entire length of a conveyor. For this reason, automatically operated conveyor systems must provide a visual or audible warning before the conveyor is started.

In determining how to apply the standards to conveyors that are automatically stopped and started as part of a regular production cycle, MSHA enforcement personnel should, on a case-by-case basis, consider the period of time the conveyor is stopped. If such stoppages are for periods of sufficient duration that persons located in the vicinity of the conveyor may reasonably perceive that the conveyor has been turned off intentionally and would anticipate that a warning will be given before the conveyor is restarted, enforcement personnel should apply 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201 and take appropriate enforcement action when the required warnings are not given.

Questions concerning the application of 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 or 57.14201 to automatically operated conveyor 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 automatically operated conveyor systems are required to comply with the requirements of 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201.

**Authority**

Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq. and 30 CFR §§ 56.14201 and 57.14201, Conveyor Start-up warnings

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**Internet Availability**

This PIB may be viewed on the World Wide Web by accessing MSHA's home page ([www.msha.gov](http://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