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PROGRAM POLICY LETTER NO. P12-V-02

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Coal Mine Safety and Health

SUBJECT: Examination, Testing, and Maintenance of Conveyor Belt Emergency Stop
Devices under 30 C.F.R. § 77.502

Scope

This Program Policy Letter (PPL) applies to coal mine operators, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enforcement personnel, and interested parties.

Purpose

The purpose of this PPL is to set forth MSHA's enforcement policy, and to provide guidance to the mining community on the monthly examination and testing requirements of electrical equipment under 30 C.F.R. §§ 77.502 and 77.502-2 involving emergency stop devices or pull cord switches and their respective activating or mechanical arms for conveyor belts. These standards are intended to ensure the safe operating conditions of electric equipment.

Policy

Emergency stop devices or cords are electrical equipment under § 77.502, and must be examined, tested, and maintained by a qualified person to assure safe operating conditions. Section 77.502-2 requires that such examination and testing be conducted at least monthly. Program Policy Manual states that MSHA considers control switches or devices to be electric equipment covered by § 77.502. An emergency stop device includes a pull cord switch and its activating mechanical arm which controls the operation of a conveyer belt.

Therefore emergency pull cord switches and their mechanical arms must be visually examined for physical damage during the monthly examinations. Although examination of the emergency pull cord switches and mechanical arms does not have to be recorded during the monthly examinations of electric equipment, a record of defective switches and arms must be kept.

Background

On February 3, 2009, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) accepted the Secretary's interpretation that an emergency stop device comprised of a pull cord switch and its mechanical activating arm is included in the definition of electric equipment and must be examined and tested monthly under § 77.502. The ALJ also found that testing must include a functional test and not be limited to visual observation.

Authority

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq., and 30 C.F.R. §§ 77.502 and 77.1607(cc).

Filing Instructions

This PPL should be filed behind the tab marked "Program Policy Letters" at the back of Volume II in the Program Policy Manual.

Internet Availability

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