



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Mine Safety and Health Administration

[OMB Control No. 1219-0138]

Proposed Extension of Information Collection: Safety Standards for Underground Coal Mine Ventilation - Belt Entry Used as an Intake Air Course to Ventilate Working Sections and Areas Where Mechanized Mining Equipment is Being Installed or Removed

AGENCY: Mine Safety and Health Administration, Labor.

ACTION: Request for public comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor (DOL), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program for all information collections, to provide the public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed collections of information, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is soliciting comments on the information collection titled “Safety Standards for Underground Coal Mine Ventilation - Belt Entry Used as an Intake Air Course to Ventilate Working Sections and Areas Where Mechanized Mining Equipment is Being Installed or Removed.”

DATES: All comments must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Comments concerning the information collection requirements of this notice may be sent by any of the methods listed below. Please note that comments received after the deadline will not be considered.

- Federal E-Rulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments for docket number MSHA-2026-0397.
- Mail/Hand Delivery: DOL-MSHA, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210. Before visiting MSHA in person, call 202-693-9440 to make an appointment.
- MSHA will post all comments as well as any attachments, except for information submitted and marked as confidential, in the docket at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Corliss A. Josephs-Conway, Acting Director, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, MSHA, at MSHA.information.collections@dol.gov (email); (202) 693–9440 (voice); or (202) 693–9441 (facsimile). These are not toll-free numbers.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

A. Legal Authority

Section 103(h) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act), as amended, 30 U.S.C. 813(h), authorizes the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to collect information necessary to carry out its duty in protecting the safety and health of miners. Further, section 101(a) of the Mine Act, 30 U.S.C. 811(a), authorizes the Secretary of Labor (Secretary) to develop, promulgate, and revise, as may be appropriate, improved mandatory health or safety standards for the protection of life and prevention of injuries in coal and metal and nonmetal (MNM) mines.

The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.) governs paperwork burdens imposed on the public by Federal agencies for using identical questions to collect information from 10 or more persons. The PRA defines paperwork burden in 44 U.S.C. 3502(2) as time, effort, or financial resources expended to generate, maintain, or provide information to or for a Federal agency. Under 44 U.S.C. 3507, the PRA also establishes policies and procedures

of information collection for controlling paperwork burdens imposed by Federal agencies on the public, including evaluating public comments.

B. Information Collection

To fulfill its statutory mandate to promote miners' health and safety, MSHA requires information under the information collection request (ICR) titled "Safety Standards for Underground Coal Mine Ventilation - Belt Entry Used as an Intake Air Course to Ventilate Working Sections and Areas Where Mechanized Mining Equipment is Being Installed or Removed." This information collection is intended to ensure that ventilation plans include all necessary details and are maintained properly to improve the safety and health of miners working in belt air mines.

Burden costs associated with the ICR include:

1. Preparing Belt Air Courses in Ventilation Plans (30 CFR 75.350, 75.351, and 75.352)

2. AMS in Ventilation Plans

2-1. Preparing Justifications of AMS Time Delays (30 CFR 75.351(m))

2-2. Recording AMS Alerts, Malfunctions, Tests, Calibrations, and Maintenance
(30 CFR 75.351(n), 75.351(o)(1)(iii), and 75.351(p))

Weekly AMS Tests

Monthly AMS Calibrations

*Recordkeeping of AMS Alerts, Malfunctions, Tests, Calibrations, and
Maintenance*

2-3. Documenting Procedures for AMS Alerts, Alarms, and Malfunctions (30
CFR 75.352(a), (b), and (c))

2-4. Reporting Alternative AMS Detectors (30 CFR 75.352(e)(7) and 75.371(pp))

3. Carbon Monoxide in Ventilation Plans

3-1. Establishing Carbon Monoxide Ambient Levels (30 CFR 75.351(j) and
75.371(hh))

3-2. Reporting Carbon Monoxide Alert Time Delays (30 CFR 75.371(nn))

3-3. Reporting Reduced Carbon Monoxide Alerts and Alarm Settings (30 CFR 75.371(oo))

4. Reporting Point-Feed Regulator Locations and Use (30 CFR 75.371(ll))

5. Recording Annual Training of AMS Operators (30 CFR 75.350(b)(2), 75.351(q)(1), and 75.351(q)(3))

5-1. Recording Training of Basic AMS Operation (30 CFR 75.350(b)(2))

5-2. Recording Training of AMS Operation (30 CFR 75.351(q)(1) and 75.351(q)(3))

The associated standards that authorize the collection of information are described below.

1. Preparing Belt Air Courses in Ventilation Plans (30 CFR 75.350, 75.351, and 75.352)

Under 30 CFR 75.301, belt air course refers to the entry in which a belt is located and any adjacent entry(ies) not separated from the belt entry by permanent ventilation controls, including any entries in series with the belt entry, terminating at a return regulator, a section loading point, or the surface.

Requirements of Belt Air Course Ventilation in Ventilation Plan

Under 30 CFR 75.350(a)(2), the air velocity in the belt entry must be at least 50 feet per minute. When requested by the mine operator, the district manager may approve lower velocities in the ventilation plan based on specific mine conditions. Air velocities must be compatible with all fire detection systems and fire suppression systems used in the belt entry.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(b), the use of air from a belt air course shall ventilate a working section, or an area where mechanized mining equipment is being installed or removed, is permitted only when evaluated and approved by the district manager in the mine ventilation plan. The mine operator must include in a ventilation plan a justification that the use of air from a belt

entry would afford at least the same measure of protection as where belt haulage entries are not used to ventilate working places.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(b)(3)(ii), a permanent designated area (DA) for dust measurements must be established at a point no greater than 50 feet upwind from the section loading point in the belt entry when the belt air flows over the loading point or no greater than 50 feet upwind from the point where belt air is mixed with air from another intake air course near the loading point. The DA must be specified and approved in the ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(b)(6), in areas of the mine developed after the effective date of this rule, unless approved by the district manager, no more than 50% of the total intake air, delivered to the working section or to areas where mechanized mining equipment is being installed or removed, can be supplied from the belt air course. The locations for measuring these air quantities must be approved in the mine ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(b)(7) and (8), the air velocity in the belt entry must be at least 100 feet per minute and not exceed 1,000 feet per minute. When requested by the mine operator, the district manager may approve alternative velocities in the ventilation plan based on specific mine conditions.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(c), notwithstanding the provisions of escapeway, additional intake air may be added to the belt air course through a point-feed regulator. The location and use of point feeds must be approved in the mine ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(d)(1), if the air through the point-feed regulator enters a belt air course which is used to ventilate a working section or an area where mechanized mining equipment is being installed or removed, the air current that will pass through the point-feed regulator must be monitored for carbon monoxide or smoke at a point within 50 feet upwind of the point-feed regulator. A second point must be monitored 1,000 feet upwind of the point-feed regulator unless the mine operator requests that a lesser distance be approved by the district manager in the mine ventilation plan based on mine specific conditions.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(d)(5), the location(s) and use of a point-feed regulator(s) must be approved in the mine ventilation plan and shown on the mine ventilation map.

Atmospheric Monitoring System (AMS) in Ventilation Plan

Under 30 CFR 75.301, atmospheric monitoring system (AMS) refers to a network consisting of hardware and software meeting the requirements of sections 75.351 and 75.1103-2 and capable of: measuring atmospheric parameters; transmitting the measurements to a designated surface location; providing alert and alarm signals; processing and cataloging atmospheric data; and, providing reports. Early-warning fire detection systems using newer technology that provides equal or greater protection, as determined by the Secretary, will be considered atmospheric monitoring systems for the purposes of this subpart.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(b)(3), a map or schematic must be provided at the designated surface location that shows the locations and type of AMS sensor at each location, and the intended air flow direction at these locations. This map or schematic must be updated within 24 hours of any change in this information.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(b)(4), the names of the designated AMS operators and other appropriate personnel, including the designated person responsible for initiating an emergency mine evacuation and the method to contact these persons, must be provided at the designated surface location.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(e)(1)(v), the locations of sensors-belt air course must be specified in the mine ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.352(e)(1)(v), any AMS used to monitor belt air course must have approved sensors to monitor for carbon monoxide at other locations in any entry that is part of the belt air course as required and specified in the mine ventilation plan.

Contents of Mine Ventilation Plan Related to Belt Air Course

The mine ventilation plan shall contain the information described in 30 CFR 75.371, and any additional provisions required by the district manager, including:

(ii) The locations (designated areas) where dust measurements would be made in the belt entry when belt air is used to ventilate working sections or areas where mechanized mining equipment is being installed or removed, in accordance with 30 CFR

75.350(b)(3).

(jj) The locations and approved velocities at dust measurement locations where air velocities in the belt entry are above or below the limits set forth in sections 75.350(a)(2) or 75.350(b)(7) and (8).

(kk) The locations where air quantities are measured as set forth in section 75.350(b)(6).

(mm) The location of any diesel-discriminating sensor and additional carbon monoxide or smoke sensors installed in the belt air course must be included in the mine ventilation plan.

2. AMS in Ventilation Plans

2-1. Preparing Justifications of AMS Time Delays (30 CFR 75.351(m))

Under 30 CFR 75.351(m), when a demonstrated need exists, time delays may be incorporated into the AMS. These time delays must only be used to account for non-fire related carbon monoxide alert and alarm sensor signals. These time delays are limited to no more than three minutes. The use and length of any time delays, or other techniques or methods which eliminate or reduce the need for time delays, must be specified and approved in the mine ventilation plan.

2-2. Recording AMS Alerts, Malfunctions, Tests, Calibrations, and Maintenance (30 CFR 75.351(n), 75.351(o)(1)(iii), and 75.351(p))

Under 30 CFR 75.351(n)(1), at least once each shift when belts are operated as part of a production shift, sensors used to detect carbon monoxide or smoke, and alarms installed must be visually examined.

Weekly AMS Tests

Under 30 CFR 75.351(n)(2), at least once every seven days, alarms for AMS installed must be functionally tested for proper operation.

Monthly AMS Calibrations

Under 30 CFR 75.351(n)(3), at intervals not to exceed 31 days—

- (i) Each carbon monoxide sensor installed must be calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer's calibration specifications. Calibration must be done with a known concentration of carbon monoxide in air sufficient to activate the alarm;
- (ii) Each smoke sensor installed must be functionally tested in accordance with the manufacturer's calibration specifications; and
- (iii) Each methane sensor installed in accordance must be calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer's calibration specifications. Calibration must be done with a known concentration of methane in air sufficient to activate an alarm.

Recording AMS Alerts, Malfunctions, Tests, Calibrations, and Maintenance

Under 30 CFR 75.351(o)(1), when an AMS is used to comply with ventilation requirements, individuals designated by the mine operator must make the following records by the end of the shift in which the following event(s) occur:

- (i) If an alert or alarm signal occurs, a record of the date, time, location and type of sensor, and the cause for the activation.
- (ii) If an AMS malfunctions, a record of the date, the extent and cause of the malfunction, and the corrective action taken to return the system to proper operation.
- (iii) A record of the seven-day tests of alert and alarm signals; calibrations; and maintenance of the AMS must be made by the person(s) performing these actions.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(o)(2), the recording of the name, date and signature of the person entering the record is included.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(o)(3), the records required by this section must be kept either in a secure book that is not susceptible to alteration, or electronically in a computer system that is

secure and not susceptible to alteration. These records must be maintained separately from other records and identifiable by a title, such as the 'AMS log.'

Under 30 CFR 75.351(p), records must be retained for at least one year at a surface location at the mine and made available for inspection by miners and authorized representatives of the Secretary.

2-3. Documenting Procedures for AMS Alerts, Alarms, and Malfunctions (30 CFR 75.352(a), 75.352(b), and 75.352(c))

Under 30 CFR 75.352(a), when a malfunction, alert, or alarm signal is received at the designated surface location, the sensor(s) that are activated must be identified and the AMS operator must promptly notify appropriate personnel.

Under 30 CFR 75.352(b), upon notification of a malfunction, alert, or alarm signal, appropriate personnel must promptly initiate an investigation to determine the cause of the signal.

Under 30 CFR 75.352(c), if any sensor installed indicates an alarm or if any two consecutive sensors indicate alert at the same time, the following procedures must be followed unless the cause of the signal(s) is known not to be a hazard to miners:

- (i) Appropriate personnel must notify miners in affected working sections, in affected areas where mechanized mining equipment is being installed or removed, and at other locations specified in the approved mine emergency evacuation and firefighting program of instruction; and
- (ii) all personnel in the affected areas, unless assigned other duties under 30 CFR 75.1502 must be withdrawn promptly to a safe location identified in the mine emergency evacuation and firefighting program of instruction.

2-4. Reporting Alternate AMS Detectors (30 CFR 75.352(e)(7) and 75.371(pp))

Under 30 CFR 75.352(e)(7), for those AMSs using sensors other than carbon monoxide sensors, an alternate detector and the alert and alarm levels associated with that detector must be specified in the approved mine ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.371(pp), the alternate detector and the alert and alarm levels associated with the detector must be included in the mine ventilation plan.

3. Carbon Monoxide in Ventilation Plans

3-1. Establishing Carbon Monoxide Ambient Levels (30 CFR 75.351(j) and 75.371(hh))

Under 30 CFR 75.301, carbon monoxide ambient level refers to the average concentration in parts per million (ppm) of carbon monoxide detected in an air course containing carbon monoxide sensors. This average concentration is representative of the composition of the mine atmosphere over a period of mining activity during non-fire conditions. Separate ambient levels may be established for different areas of the mine.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(j), carbon monoxide ambient levels and the means to determine these levels must be approved in the mine ventilation plan (section 75.371(hh)) for monitors installed in accordance with sections 75.340(a)(1)(ii), 75.340(a)(2)(ii), 75.350(b), and 75.350(d).

Under 30 CFR 75.371(hh), the ambient level in parts per million of carbon monoxide, and the method for determining the ambient level, in all areas where carbon monoxide sensors are installed must be included in the mine ventilation plan.

3-2. Preparing Carbon Monoxide Alert Time Delays (30 CFR 75.371(nn))

Under 30 CFR 75.371(nn), the mine ventilation plan shall contain the length of the time delay or any other method used to reduce the number of non-fire related alert and alarm signals from carbon monoxide sensors.

3-3. Reporting Reduced Carbon Monoxide Alerts and Alarm Settings (30 CFR 75.371(oo))

Under 30 CFR 75.351(i)(2), an AMS alert at 5 ppm carbon monoxide above the ambient level and alarm at 10 ppm carbon monoxide above the ambient level when carbon monoxide sensors are used; and alarm at a smoke optical density of 0.022 per meter when smoke sensors are used. Reduced alert and alarm settings approved by the district manager may be required for carbon monoxide sensors identified in the mine ventilation plan.

Under 30 CFR 75.371(oo), the reduced alert and alarm settings for carbon monoxide sensors must be included in the mine ventilation plan.

4. Reporting Point-Feed Regulator Locations and Use in Ventilation Plans (30 CFR 75.371(ll))

Under 30 CFR 75.301, point feeding refers to the process of providing additional intake air to the belt air course from another intake air course through a regulator.

Under 30 CFR 75.350(d)(1), the air current that will pass through the point-feed regulator must be monitored for carbon monoxide or smoke at a point within 50 feet upwind of the point-feed regulator. A second point must be monitored 1,000 feet upwind of the point-feed regulator unless the mine operator requests that a lesser distance be approved by the district manager in the mine ventilation plan based on mine specific conditions.

Under 30 CFR 75.371(ll), the mine ventilation plan shall contain the locations and use of point-feed regulators, in accordance with paragraphs 75.350(c) and 75.350(d)(5).

5. Recording Annual Training of AMS Operators (30 CFR 75.350(b)(2), 75.351(q)(1), and 75.351(q)(3))

Under 30 CFR 75.350(b)(2), all miners must be trained annually in the basic operating principles of the AMS, including the actions required in the event of activation of any AMS alert or alarm signal. This training must be conducted prior to working underground in a mine that uses belt air to ventilate working sections or areas where mechanized mining equipment is installed or removed. It must be conducted as part of a miner's 30 CFR part 48 new miner training (section 48.5), experienced miner training (section 48.6), or annual refresher training (section 48.8).

Under 30 CFR 75.351(q)(1), all AMS operators must be trained annually in the proper operation of the AMS.

Under 30 CFR 75.351(q)(3), a record of the content of training, the person conducting the training, and the date the training was conducted, must be maintained at the mine for at least one year by the mine operator.

II. Desired Focus of Comments

MSHA is soliciting comments concerning the proposed information collection titled “Safety Standards for Underground Coal Mine Ventilation - Belt Entry Used as an Intake Air Course to Ventilate Working Sections and Areas Where Mechanized Mining Equipment is Being Installed or Removed.” MSHA is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of MSHA’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;
- Suggest methods to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other

technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

The ICR is available on <https://www.regulations.gov>. MSHA cautions commenters against providing any information in the submission that should not be publicly disclosed. Full comments, including personal information provided, will be made available on <https://www.regulations.gov> and <https://www.reginfo.gov>.

The public may also examine publicly available documents at DOL-MSHA, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210. Before visiting MSHA in person, call 202-693-9440 to make an appointment.

Questions about the information collection requirements may be directed to the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION section of this notice.

III. Current Actions

This ICR concerns provisions for Safety Standards for Underground Coal Mine Ventilation - Belt Entry Used as an Intake Air Course to Ventilate Working Sections and Areas Where Mechanized Mining Equipment is Being Installed or Removed. MSHA has updated the data with respect to the number of respondents, responses, time burden, and burden costs supporting this ICR from the previous ICR.

Type of Review: Extension, without change, of a currently approved collection

Agency: Mine Safety and Health Administration

OMB Control Number: 1219-0138

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit entity

Number of Annual Respondents: 96

Frequency: On occasion

Number of Annual Responses: 405

Annual Time Burden: 1,447 hours

Annual Recordkeeping Costs: \$200

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the proposed ICR; they will become a matter of public record and be available at <https://www.reginfo.gov>.

Corliss A. Josephs-Conway,

Certifying Officer,

Mine Safety and Health Administration.

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