

News Release



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MSHA further improves effectiveness of mine rescue teams *Agency publishes final rule on mine rescue equipment*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) today published a final rule in the *Federal Register* that addresses equipment for mine rescue teams serving underground coal and metal and nonmetal mines. It updates the existing standards to reflect advances in mine rescue team equipment technology and improve the effectiveness of mine rescue teams in responding to mine emergencies.

“Mine rescue team members often put themselves in danger to save miners injured or trapped underground as the result of an explosion, fire, roof fall or water inundation. It is critical that they be provided with the most up-to-date protective equipment so they can safely and effectively carry out their mission,” said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “In an emergency, a properly equipped mine rescue team could mean the difference between life and death.”

Requirements of the final rule include the following:

- Four-hour (rather than two-hour) self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBAs).
- Two (rather than one) extra oxygen bottles per six SCBAs.
- Eight hours (rather than six hours) of liquid air, liquid oxygen, pressurized oxygen or oxygen-generating chemicals and carbon dioxide-absorbent chemicals to maintain SCBAs for a longer period of time.
- Four (rather than two) gas detectors appropriate for each gas that may be encountered.

The final rule also removes obsolete requirements for flame safety lamps and oxygen indicators.

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