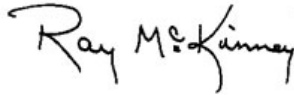


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PROCEDURE INSTRUCTION LETTER NO. I06-V-01

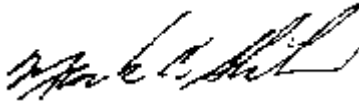
FROM: RAY McKINNEY
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SUBJECT: Procedures for Implementing the Mine Plan Approval Database
System

Scope

This instruction letter applies to Coal Mine Safety and Health (CMS&H) district personnel, Educational Policy and Development (EPD) personnel in Educational Field Service Centers and Pittsburgh Safety and Health Technology Center, Technical Support Branch (TS), Mine Waste and Geotechnical Engineering Division personnel who are responsible to enter data for tracking mine plan approvals and periodic plan reviews and to CMS&H, EPD, and TS headquarters personnel responsible for monitoring these activities.

Purpose

This letter establishes the procedures necessary to ensure that the data from certain mine plans and periodic plan reviews are entered into the Mine Plan Approval (MPA)

database system through the MSHA Standardized Information System (MSIS) on the Agency's intranet site, www.mshanet.msha.gov . With these procedures, MSHA District Managers and Headquarters will monitor mine plan approval activities.

Procedure Instructions

The district offices or other agency offices reviewing plans on behalf of the district offices shall enter data into the MPA System. The following plans, at a minimum, shall be tracked in the system by or for each district:

Underground Mines

Roof Control

Ventilation

Mine Emergency Evacuation and Firefighting Program of Instruction

Smoking Prevention

Part 48 Subpart A Training

Part 48 Subpart B Training

Part 75 Training

Surface Mines

Part 48 Subpart B Training

Part 77 Training

All other plans, waivers, and permits approved or acknowledged by the District Manager may be tracked in the system at the discretion of district officials. Except, data concerning the receipt, evaluation, and recommendations for approval of training plans, shall be entered by the district or Educational Field Service (EFS) representatives who are assigned to review training plans and forward such documents to the districts in its region. In addition, data concerning the receipt, review, and recommendations for approval of impoundments or refuse pile plans shall be entered by district personnel or by Pittsburgh Safety and Health Technology Center, Mine Waste and Geotechnical Engineering Division personnel.

The data that must be entered into the system for each of the required plans include:

- a. the date any MSHA office initially received the plan;
- b. the interval from the date of base plan approval that will be used to calculate when periodic review is due;
- c. the date the periodic review was completed;
- d. the decision and the date the district manager signed the letter of approval or disapproval; and
- e. the mine identification number.

The MPA System will calculate the due dates for periodic reviews based on the dates the plans were approved for at least the nine plans listed above that are required to be tracked in the system. Additional data and comments may also be stored in the system.

The MPA System, as now installed on the MSIS, allows data to be entered anywhere a connection to the MSHA computer network can be made and by all persons with prearranged permissions, regardless of organization affiliation or location. Some adjustments are being made to the system to accommodate unusual plan characteristics such as training plans submitted by contractors that do not have identification numbers, provisions of tracking impoundments by both mine id and/or impoundment id numbers, and the ability to handle multiple approved base plans for impoundments so as to accommodate the approval of designs for stages of construction at the same dam construction site. Each change or refinement will be announced as it is introduced to the system.

The CMS&H Division of Safety and District Managers shall monitor plan review and approval activity, including mines with no record of required plans, mines with overdue reviews, and plan processing time. These National level reports are accessible at headquarters to personnel with appropriate permissions. Similar District level reports are available to the districts as oversight and managerial tools for their plan approval system.

Background

CMS&H has maintained a database system to track certain mine plans and periodic reviews on personal computers in district offices since 1990. The system was implemented in response to recommendations made by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to improve Agency management of the plan approval and review process. As a result of the recommendations, CMS&H made a commitment to systematically track plan approvals and reviews in the districts and to monitor district activity at the national level. Subsequent events have resulted in other internal and external reviews of the plan approval process. A more recent report by the Government Accounting Office (GAO) emphasized the Agency's need to maintain and improve Headquarters oversight of the plan approval process, especially as it pertained to high hazard impoundments and ventilation and roof control in underground coal mines. This procedure instruction letter consolidates information previously issued during the implementation of the system and recognizes the desired data entry by organizations other than the Coal Mine Safety and Health Branch using the web-based MSIS.

Authority

Sections 115(a), 302(a), 303(o), 303(t), 317(c), 317 (i) and 317(m) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977; Title 30, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 48, 75, and 77.

MSHA Handbook Series:

Mine Ventilation Plan Approval Procedures, Handbook Number PH92-V-6
Coal Impoundments Inspection Procedures, Handbook Number PH89-V-4
(currently being revised)
Education and Training Procedure, Handbook Number PH03-III-1

Filing Instructions

MSHA personnel should file this letter behind the tab marked "Procedure Instruction Letters" in the binder titled MSHA Program Policy Handbooks and Procedure Instruction Letters.

Issuing Office and Contact Person

Coal Mine Safety and Health, Safety Division
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Distribution

CMS&H Principal Officials
EPD
Technical Support Pittsburgh Technology Center