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PROGRAM INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. P08-05

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SUBJECT: Suitable Materials for Use in Inflatable Barricades and Emergency Stoppings

**Who needs this information?**

Underground coal mine operators, miners and miners' representatives, independent contractors, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enforcement and technical support personnel, manufacturers, and other interested parties need this information. This Program Information Bulletin (PIB) is issued to provide additional guidance to mine operators and MSHA district managers. This information should be used in conjunction with Program Policy Letter (PPL) No. [P06-V-10](#) (October 24, 2006), concerning implementation of emergency response plans.

**What is the purpose of this PIB?**

Section 2 of the MINER Act requires that each underground coal mine operator adopt a written accident response plan ("emergency response plan" or ERP). PPL P06-V-10 described some options through which miners could isolate themselves from contaminated/hazardous environments. PPL P06-V-10 states, in part, that the ERP should include a provision that two inflatable stoppings or other quick deployable barricade units be provided for each working section within 6 months of becoming commercially available. This PIB provides guidance with respect to suitable materials for construction of inflatable stoppings and barricades.

**Information**

Materials which meet the technical and testing requirements for brattice cloth in 30 CFR Part 7, Subpart B and which have been issued an MSHA approval number will be considered suitable for use in the construction of inflatable barricades and emergency stoppings. Only such materials that are used in the fabrication of the inflatable portion of the barricade or any portion of the barricade exposed to the mine atmosphere will be subject to these technical and testing requirements. Any additional coverings or layers that are provided to add durability or mechanical strength will not be required to obtain MSHA approval.

**What is the background for this PIB?**

On June 15, 2006, the MINER Act became effective. Section 2 of the MINER Act amends Section 316 of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 and requires underground coal mine operators to develop and adopt, within 60 days of enactment, a written emergency response plan which is to be approved by MSHA. This section further requires that the ERP provide for the evacuation of all individuals endangered by an emergency and the maintenance of individuals trapped underground in the event that miners are not able to evacuate the mine. PPL P06-V-10 states, in part, that the ERP should include a provision that two inflatable stoppings or other quick deployable barricade units be provided for each working section within 6 months of becoming commercially available.

Some manufacturers have developed emergency quick-deployable inflatable barricades as an innovative approach to assist in providing for the maintenance of individuals trapped underground in the event that miners are not able to evacuate the mine. These manufacturers are seeking guidance from MSHA relative to applicable requirements for determination of the suitability of materials used in constructing inflatable emergency stoppings and barricades. Current regulations at 30 C.F.R. §75.1100-2 (i)(1), Quantity and location of firefighting equipment, Emergency materials, require mine operators to have emergency materials readily available not exceeding 2 miles from each working section. These emergency materials include boards, brattice cloth, nails, tools, etc. for mine emergency situations. In an emergency, these materials would be used for providing emergency barricades and for controlling/restoring ventilation controls. The innovative inflatable quick-deployable emergency barricade/stopping devices can substitute for/or supplement the currently required conventional materials. Essentially, much of the wood and brattice could be replaced by the inflatable devices. Currently, flame resistant brattice cloth approved for underground mine use under 30 C.F.R. § 7.27 for ventilation controls is the same brattice cloth that may be utilized as suitable barricading material. Testing for approval of flame resistant brattice cloth is described in detail under 30 C.F.R. § 7.27

**What is MSHA's authority for this PIB?**

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.; 30 C.F.R. Part 7, Subpart B, 30 C.F.R. § 75.1100-2(i)(1).

**Where is this PIB on the Internet?**

This information may be viewed on MSHA's home page (<http://www.msha.gov>), then choosing "Compliance Info" and "Program Information Bulletins."

**Who are the MSHA contact persons for this PIB?**

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**Who will receive this PIB?**

MSHA PPM Holders  
Underground Coal Operators  
Miners' Representatives  
Independent Contractors  
Special Interest Groups