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PROGRAM POLICY LETTER NO. P12-IV-01

FROM: NEAL H. MERRIFIELD   
Administrator for Metal and Nonmetal  
Mine Safety and Health

SUBJECT: Safety Belts and Lines (30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005)

### **Scope**

This Program Policy Letter (PPL) applies to surface and underground metal and nonmetal mine operators, contractors, equipment manufacturers, miners, miners' representatives, and Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health enforcement personnel.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this PPL is to clarify compliance with safety belts and lines as required under 30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005 to enhance consistency and protection of miners.

### **Policy**

MSHA standards at 30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005 require that safety belts and lines be worn when persons work where there is danger of falling; a second person must tend the lifeline when bins, tanks or other dangerous areas are entered. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) fall protection standard at 29 C.F.R. §1926.501(b)(1), *Unprotected sides and edges*, states that "Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems." In many cases, compliance with OSHA's fall protection standard will satisfy the requirements of MSHA's 30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005 standard. MSHA will evaluate all work area hazards to ensure appropriate fall protection provisions are in place to protect miners from fall hazards.

**Background**

This policy letter clarifies the Agency's application of 30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005, *Safety belts and lines*. Operators have raised questions regarding what factors MSHA takes into consideration when applying §§ 56/57.15005.

**Authority**

The Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended, 30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.; 30 C.F.R. §§ 56/57.15005.

**Internet Availability**

This program policy letter may be viewed on the World Wide Web by accessing the MSHA home page (<http://www.msha.gov>) and by choosing "Compliance Info" and "Program Policy Letters."

**Issuing Office and Contact Person**

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**Distribution**

MSHA Program Policy Holders  
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Underground and Surface Independent Contractors  
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