

Occupational Health & Safety

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MSHA Moving on OSH Management Programs Rule

Three informal public meetings next month will gather information from the industry about effective safety and health management programs already in use at U.S. mines. Comments are due by Dec. 17.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration said it will host informal public meetings Oct. 8, 12, and 14 to gather information about "effective, comprehensive safety and health management programs at mines." MSHA will use the information as it develops a Safety and Health Management Programs proposed rule.

MSHA will post transcripts of the meetings and include them in the rulemaking record. The locations are:

Oct. 8, MSHA National Office, 1100 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA (call 202-693-9440 for information)

Oct. 12, Embassy Suites Sacramento-Riverwalk Promenade, Sacramento, CA (916-326-5000)

Oct. 14, Omni William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA (412-281-7100)

The agency is accepting comments until Dec. 17; submit them via www.regulations.gov, identified with "RIN 1219-AB71," or by sending an e-mail to zzMSHA-comments@dol.gov with "RIN 1219-AB71" in the subject line.

MSHA said it has reviewed these existing guidelines for OSH management programs:

OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program and its Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines

ANSI/AIHA Z10-2005, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems

ISO 9001:2008 (E), Quality management systems - Requirements

The British Standards Institution's OHSAS 18001:2007, Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series, Occupational health and safety management systems - Requirements.

Its announcement of the meetings said based on these guidelines, the components of effective safety and health management programs generally include:

1. Management commitment
2. Worker involvement
3. Hazard identification, including workplace inspections for violations of mandatory health and safety standards
4. Hazard prevention and control
5. Safety and health training
6. Program evaluation

"Year after year, many companies experience low injury and illness rates and low violation rates," the notice states. "For these companies, preventing harm to their workers is more than compliance with safety and health requirements; it reflects the embodiment of a culture of safety -- from the CEO to the worker to the contractor. This culture of safety derives from a commitment to a systematic, effective, comprehensive safety and health management program, implemented with the full participation of all workers. MSHA understands that many companies have developed and implemented effective safety and health management programs. At the meetings, you will hear about some of these programs. The Agency is interested in receiving comments on all aspects of safety and health management programs."