

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**Mine Safety and Health Administration****RIN 1219-AB20****Mine Rescue Teams****AGENCY:** Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), Labor.**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) will hold a public meeting to gather ideas and suggestions from the mining community on the current state of availability, quality and preparedness of mine rescue teams. The ideas and suggestions will be considered by MSHA in determining what actions can be taken to improve mine rescue capabilities.

DATES: The public meeting will be held on March 28, 2002.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at the following location: National Mine Health and Safety Academy, 1301 Airport Road, Beaver, West Virginia 25813-9426, Phone: 304-256-3257.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Marvin W. Nichols, Jr., Director, Office of Standards, Regulations and Variances, MSHA, 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203-1984. He can be reached at *nichols-marvin@msha.gov* (Internet e-mail), 703-235-1910 (Voice), or 703-235-5551 (Fax).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Background**

In the wake of several mine disasters, Congress promulgated the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act). Congress believed that the ready availability of mine rescue capability in the event of an accident would be vital to protect miners. Accordingly, § 115(e) of the Mine Act required the Secretary of Labor to publish regulations requiring that mine rescue teams be available for rescue and recovery work at each underground mine. Section 115(e) also allowed mine operators to make cooperative arrangements to provide for the availability of mine rescue teams.

On July 3, 1980, (45 FR 46992), MSHA promulgated a new part 49, in title 30 of the Code of Federal Regulations, that included requirements for mine rescue teams in the coal and metal and nonmetal mining industries. The purpose of the rule was to implement § 115(e) of the Mine Act by ensuring the availability of rescue teams at underground mines in case of a mine emergency.

The regulation generally requires two mine rescue teams per mine and allows

outside coverage teams. To limit the expense, many mines now choose to contract for mine rescue service. Existing part 49 places no restrictions on the number of mines a contractor can agree to cover.

In 1995, MSHA hosted a Mine Emergency Preparedness Conference at the National Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beckley, West Virginia. Attendees included mine rescue association members, mine rescue team trainers and captains, operators, state and federal government officials, educators, and international representatives. Issues addressed at the conference included the need to (1) increase the numbers of qualified mine rescue personnel, (2) improve the availability of trained mine rescue teams, (3) assure the quality of contract teams, and (4) provide incentives for mine operators to maintain mine rescue teams. One outcome of this conference was the establishment of a committee to study the issues identified at the conference and to make recommendations to MSHA on ways to address those issues.

In 1998, MSHA established the Mine Rescue Team Initiative Committee to investigate a decline in the number of available mine rescue teams, to make recommendations for maintaining the quality of existing mine rescue teams, and to emphasize MSHA's commitment to mine rescue. MSHA conducted interviews with industry and labor, and state agencies to gather input from all facets of the mining community. Given the passage of time since the committee completed its work, we are conducting a meeting to gather current information concerning mine rescue capabilities.

II. Public Meeting

MSHA will conduct a public meeting to gather input from interested parties on the subject of mine rescue teams, quality and preparedness.

We will conduct the meeting in an informal manner, and a court reporter will make a verbatim transcript of the proceeding.

The meeting is open to the public and will begin at 9:00 a.m. and finish after the last speaker.

Upon request, after all scheduled speakers have made an oral statement, we will allow members of the public to speak at the meeting on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, if there are no additional speakers after the last scheduled speaker, the meeting will be adjourned.

Send your requests to make oral presentations to MSHA, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances; 4015 Wilson Boulevard, Room 631,

Arlington, VA 22203. Phone or fax requests may be made at voice: 703-235-1910; or fax: 703-235-5551. You may also request to speak when you sign in at the meeting.

In addition to making an oral statement, any member of the public may submit written statements, and other data to MSHA representatives at the meeting.

This meeting will give mine operators, miners and their representatives, and other interested parties an opportunity to present their views on the actions that can be taken to result in more effective mine rescue team capabilities.

We are specifically interested in comments addressing the issues described below, although parties are encouraged to submit comments on any relevant mine rescue team issue. Information received will help us resolve these issues and determine the most effective way to address the changing needs of the underground mining industry and its mine rescue team capability.

A. Availability of Mine Rescue Teams

How can mine operators be encouraged to provide for more mine rescue team capability?

B. Mine Rescue Team Membership

How should an individual's employment history in underground mining affect that individual's ability to serve on a mine rescue team?

C. Training for Mine Rescue Team Members

Should additional training be required for a former mine rescue team member who rejoins a team which still uses the same breathing apparatus?

Should there be joint training of mine rescue teams not located at the same rescue station?

For mine rescue teams not located at the same rescue station, how many hours of joint training would be required?

Should both teams participate concurrently in MSHA-supported rescue contests or MSHA emergency response drills (MERD)?

Should teams that participate in a MSHA-supported mine rescue contest or MERD exercises earn "training credit" for each participating member?

D. Instructor Qualifications

How should an individual's employment history in underground mining affect that individual's ability to serve as a mine rescue team instructor?

E. Equipment Availability, Maintenance, and Testing Requirements

Comments from the mining community have suggested that the costs associated with the current equipment requirements prevent some mine operators from establishing a mine rescue team.

In light of today's mine rescue team needs, what type, amount, maintenance and testing of equipment is appropriate to ensure the same level of protection for miners?

F. Incentives

A recommendation was received by the Agency to consider an incentive in the form of penalty reductions for mine operators that establish and maintain mine rescue teams.

The Agency believes this type of incentive would be prohibited by the Mine Act. We would, however, welcome suggestions on other types of incentives which would encourage operators to establish their own mine rescue teams.

Dated: March 7, 2002.

Dave D. Lauriski,

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health.

[FR Doc. 02-5947 Filed 3-11-02; 8:45 am]

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MEDICARE PAYMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

Commission Meeting

AGENCY: Medicare Payment Advisory Commission.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Commission will hold its next public meeting on Thursday, March 21, 2002, and Friday, March 22, 2002, at the Ronald Reagan Building, International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. The meeting is tentatively scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on March 21, and at 9 a.m. on March 22.

Topics for discussion include: Assessing the Medicare benefit package; changes in medical practice and the delivery of care—implications for the Medicare benefit package; changes in private sector benefit packages—implications for the Medicare benefit package; supplementing the Medicare benefit package: Medicaid, Medigap, retiree health care, and the role of Medicare+Choice; total spending and sources of payment for beneficiaries' health care; coverage of and payment for non-physician practitioners; beneficiaries' access to Medicare

hospice care; Medicare coverage of cardiac rehabilitation programs and pulmonary rehabilitation services; Medicare benefit package: preliminary findings; criteria for evaluating potential changes to the Medicare benefit package; options for changing the Medicare benefit package, and reviewing the SGR update for 2003.

Agendas will be mailed on March 12, 2002. The final agenda will be available on the Commission's website (www.MedPAC.gov).

ADDRESSES: MedPAC's address is: 1730 K Street, NW., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006. The telephone number is (202) 653-7220.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Ellison, Office Manager, (202) 653-7220.

Murray N. Ross,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 02-5921 Filed 3-11-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6820-BW-M

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Request for Clearance; Public Information Collection Requirements To Be Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget; Notice

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Request for clearance: Public information collection requirements to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is announcing plans to request extension of approval for this collection. In accordance with the requirement of Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), we are providing an opportunity for public comment on this action. After obtaining and considering public comment, NSF will prepare the submission requesting that OMB extend clearance of this collection for at least 3 years.

DATES: Written comments should be received by May 13, 2002, to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Written comments regarding the information collection and requests for copies of the proposed information collection request should be addressed to Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Rm. 295, Arlington, VA 22230, or by e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov, and Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs,

Office of Management and Budget, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503. Attn: Lauren Wittenberg, NSF Desk Officer.

Comments: Written comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; or (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 295, Arlington, Virginia 22230; telephone (703) 292-7556; or send e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: Cross-Site Evaluation of the National Science Foundation's Directorate for Education and Human Resources' Urban Systemic Program.

OMB Approval Number: 3145-0186.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 2002.

Abstract:

The National Science Foundation (NSF) requests a three-year clearance for an evaluation of the Urban Systemic Program (USP), a study that has been on-going since October 1999 first under OMB 3145-0136 and now under OMB 3145-0186. Due to a change in OMB terms of clearance for OMB 3145-0136, NSF established an independent clearance for the USP study under the terms of an emergency clearance.

USP began in 1999 when NSF made competitive awards of up to \$3 million per year, for up to 5 years, to 5 urban school districts. Since then, the program has made awards to 13 additional districts in 2000, and another 9 districts in 2001. The USP represents one of NSF's major investments in improving science and mathematics education in