

MSHA

The mining industry is covered by their own rule (30 CFR Parts 56 and 57 et al), which came into full effect in September 2000. Most of the requirements are similar to OSHA, including monitoring, with the additional stipulation that each mine operator establish a system to evaluate exposure sufficiently to comply with the rule.

The action level of 85 dBA TWA (50% dose), criterion level at 90 dBA TWA (100% dose), and 5 dB exchange rate are the same as the OSHA rule. The September rule contains hearing testing requirements, similar to those in the OSHA rule, that are new for most of the mining industry. The hearing test under MSHA is optional at the discretion of the miner, and that the person providing the tests must be CAOHC certified 'or equivalent'.

Hearing protection rules are similar as well, with the addition of a requirement for double HPD (earplug under an earmuff) where exposure exceeds 105 dBA. Choices of HPD are defined as at

least two types of earplugs and two types of muffs. No method of HPD effectiveness evaluation is stipulated.

Feasible noise controls are required where exposures exceed the criterion level even if the control does not reduce exposure to less than 90 dBA TWA. Administrative controls are acceptable (limiting the time miners spend in hazardous noise via employee rotation or reducing the amount of time noisy equipment is operated); they must be provided to the miner in writing and posted at the worksite.

STS cases require 10-day notification, and, unless the STS is found not to be work-related, follow-up including retraining, reissuing and refitting of HPD, and review of controls to detect deficiencies are required.

MSHA uses a their own system for recording and reporting occupational injuries and illnesses. Recordable hearing loss is defined as a 25 dB average shift from baseline at 2000, 3000, and 4000 hz, requiring maintenance of separate baselines for STS calculation and recordability.