

Chapter 12 - HEALTH HAZARD EVALUATIONS (HHEs) AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

HHEs and TAs are environmental investigations conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for evaluation of occupational health hazards. Authority for such investigations in mines is contained in Section 501(a) (11) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977.

In accordance with regulations and policies of NIOSH and our recent agreement, the following are major provisions pertaining to HHEs and TAs:

- A. By definition of NIOSH, HHEs are investigations requested, in writing, by a representative of management (mine operator) or an authorized representative of the miners' labor organization (generally a union official) or a miner who secures the written authority of at least two other miners to be their representative. TAs are investigations requested, in writing, by any local, State or Federal agency with interest or authority in mining, such as MSHA.
- B. When a request for an HHE is received by NIOSH which appears to be a matter of compliance with existing regulations, that request will be referred to the division of Health, Coal Mine Safety and Health, for inquiry and action.
- C. All requests for TAS originating in district, subdistrict, or field offices shall be forwarded to the Division of Health for review prior to forwarding to NIOSH. In an emergency, the Division of Health should be contacted by telephone.
- D. If an inspector becomes aware of a problem at a coal mine that NIOSH apparently should address, the miners' representative should be urged and assisted to make a request, in writing, for an HHE to the following address:

Attention: Coordinator, Mining Health Hazard Evaluations
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
944 Chestnut Ridge Road
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505-2888

The request should contain the following basic information, if possible:

1. Name of Company;
2. Name and location of mine;
3. Brief description of problem or hazard;
4. Ill effects reported, if any;

5. Chemical or Physical agent responsible, if known; and
 6. Name and telephone number of contact at mine.
- E. If the mine is covered by the BCOA - UMWA contract and the miners' representatives do not wish to write NIOSH, they should be urged to contact the Director of Occupational Health, UMWA, at the following address:
- United Mine Workers of America
900 15th Street, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20005
- F. An example of the form for submittal of requests to NIOSH for HHEs is shown in Chapter 6 of this manual.