

**Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Deep Mine Safety**

Document Number: 580-2200-003

TITLE: Section 316(h): Use of electronic methane detectors in lieu of approved flame safety lamps

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1997

AUTHORITY: Section 316(h) Pennsylvania Bituminous Coal Mine Act, 52 P.S. §§701 and 702.

Section 1915-A of the Administrative Code of April 7, 1929, 71 P.S. §510-15A.

POLICY: In general, pursuant to Section 702, machine operators can use approved electronic methane detectors in lieu of a flame safety lamp to comply with Section 316(h).

PURPOSE: The purpose of this technical guidance is to indicate when a machine operator can use an electronic methane detector in lieu of the flame safety lamp.

APPLICABILITY: This guidance applies to all Bureau personnel who inspect underground bituminous coal mines.

DISCLAIMER: The policy and procedures outlined in this guidance document are intended to supplement existing requirements. Nothing in this policy and procedures shall affect regulatory requirements.

The policy and procedures herein are not an adjudication or regulation. There is no intent on the part of the Department to give this policy the weight or deference that would be accorded an adjudication or regulation. The policy and procedure merely announces the policy that DEP intends to apply in the future for the rules governing the use of approved electronic methane detectors in lieu of flame safety lamps to test for the presence of explosive gas (methane).

PAGE LENGTH: 2 pages

LOCATION: Volume 9, Tab 8

REFERENCES:

The Bituminous Coal Mine Act, 52 P.S. §§701 and 702; Sections 1118 and Section 1915-A of the Administrative Code of 1929 71 P.S. §510-15A.

PROCEDURES:

Inspection Staff:

Machine operators can use electronic methane detectors in lieu of the flame safety lamps to comply with Section 316(h) provided that:

- The electronic methane detectors being used are Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) certified as explosion proof and meeting acceptability parameters. The methane detectors are approved for use in Pennsylvania bituminous coal mines by the Department.
- The methane detectors are maintained in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.
- Section 224(b) is complied with through the use of an approved flame safety lamp and/or an approved methane and oxygen detector(s).
- The operator notifies the Bureau if machine operators will use a methane detector in lieu of a flame safety lamp. This notification shall address the use, maintenance, and calibration for the detector to be used.

Alternative to flame safety lamps and/or detectors:

- The use of other methods for detecting explosive and noxious gas other than a flame safety lamp or approved electronic methane detectors shall be permitted only if this alternative has been approved by the Department pursuant to Section 702 of the Act.

NOTE: This guidance in no way prohibits continued use of approved flame safety lamps in Pennsylvania bituminous coal mines by machine operators. Shotfirers, mine officials (mine foreman, assistant mine foreman, and mine examiners), and employees entering bleeder entries and old workings shall continue to carry and use a flame safety lamp for the detection of explosive and noxious gas.