
Persons shall not smoke or carry smoking materials, matches, or lighters underground. The operator shall institute a reasonable program to assure that persons entering the mine do not carry such items.

§ 57.22102 Smoking (I-C mines).

(a) Persons shall not smoke or carry smoking materials, matches, or lighters underground. The operator shall institute a reasonable program to assure that persons entering the mine do not carry such items.

(b) Smoking is prohibited in surface milling facilities except in designated, dust-free smoking areas.


Open flames shall not be permitted underground except for welding, cutting, and other maintenance operations, and for igniting underground retorts in a Subcategory I-A mine. When using open flames in other than fresh air, or in places where methane may enter the air current, tests for methane shall be conducted by a competent person before work is started and every 10 minutes until the job is completed. Continuous methane monitors with audible alarms may be used after the initial test has been conducted as an alternative to the ten-minute interval testing requirement. Open flames shall not be used in atmospheres containing 0.5 percent or more methane.

§ 57.22104 Open flames (I-C mines).

(a) Open flames, including cutting and welding, shall not be used underground.

All mines shall be ventilated mechanically.


(a) Main fans shall be—
(1) Installed on the surface in noncombustible housings provided with noncombustible air ducts;
(2) Except in Subcategory I-A mines, provided with an automatic signal device to give an alarm when the fan stops. The signal device shall be located so that it can be seen or heard by a person designated by the mine operator.
(3) When an internal combustion engine is used to power a main fan, the engine shall be—
(a) Installed in a noncombustible housing;
(b) Protected from a possible fuel supply fire or explosion; and
(c) Located out of direct line with the forward and reverse airstream provided by the fan. Engine exhaust gases shall be vented to the atmosphere so that exhaust cannot contaminate mine intake air.

(b) Fan installations shall be—
(1) Offset so that the fan and its associated components are not in direct line with possible explosive forces;
(2) Equipped with explosion-doors, a weak-wall, or other equivalent devices located to relieve the pressure that would be created by an explosion underground. The area of the doors or weak-wall shall be at least equivalent to the average cross-sectional area of the airway.

(c) (1) All main fan-related electrical equipment and cables located within or exposed to the forward or reverse airstream shall be approved by MSHA under the applicable requirements of 30 CFR part 18;
(2) Drive belts and nonmetallic fan blades shall be constructed of static-conducting material; and
(3) Aluminum alloy fan blades shall not contain more than 0.5 percent magnesium. [Paragraph (c)(3) of this section does not apply to Subcategory I-C mines].

(d) When an internal combustion engine is used to power a main fan or as standby power, the engine shall be—
(1) Installed in a noncombustible housing;
(2) Protected from a possible fuel supply fire or explosion; and
(3) Located out of direct line with the forward and reverse airstream provided by the fan. Engine exhaust gases shall be vented to the atmosphere so that exhaust cannot contaminate mine intake air.

(e) For Subcategory I-A mines only: Main exhaust fans shall be equipped with methane monitors to give an alarm when methane in the return air reaches 0.5 percent. The alarm shall be located so that it can be seen or heard by a person designated by the mine operator.

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