

## **PIB P07-03 - BREATHABLE AIR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

These questions and answers are intended to provide guidance for coal operators in submitting their emergency response plans (ERPs) to MSHA. While the answers given may be appropriate in many mines, mine-specific conditions in some mines may make alternative arrangements appropriate to the circumstances in the mine. As discussed in PIB P07-03, any particular approval or denial of an ERP should take into consideration mine-specific conditions. In submitting ERPs, operators are advised to discuss the mine-specific conditions that would justify the operator's breathable air proposal.

### **1. How can outby miners, pumpers, examiners, etc., be provided with breathable air?**

*As with air provided to miners at the working section, breathable air should be provided to outby miners working in established work positions within an inflatable chamber, barricade, or other alternative that isolates miners from contaminated environments. Air may be provided through compressed air or oxygen canisters, chemical oxygen generator, a bore hole, or compressed air lines. To increase the chances that outby miners could reach breathable air supplies after an accident, District Managers generally will be looking for breathable air locations to be located not more than one hour travel distance from each other. This will help assure that miners would not need to travel more than 30 minutes in either direction to reach a refuge area. Pumpers and examiners who travel to remote areas of the mine present special circumstances that may require them to travel more than 30 minutes to reach breathable air supplies in the ventilation mains.*

### **2. Can a mine operator construct a safe haven every 4 – 5 miles in the primary and secondary escapeways with two Ocenco 6.5 SCSRs per outby miner to get to the refuge area? This would mean that an outby miner would never be more than 2 – 2.5 miles from a refuge area and would have 2 SCSRs to start with, in addition to the outby caches in the required escapeways spaced at distances approved in the plan.**

*As a rule of thumb, refuge areas for breathable air could be located at every other cache of SCSRs (1 hour intervals).*

### **3. Do we have to provide breathable air for both crews during shift change, including “hot seat” changes?**

Yes.