

## **Future of Mine Safety Training Focus of NIOSH Collaboration**

Mine trainers play a critical role in workplace safety. Thanks to a recent collaborative effort, the trainer's job could change in the future with the use of technology, new assessment tools and higher accountability to training miners.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Office of Mine Safety and Health Research (OMSHR) recently brought together a diverse group of stakeholders with representatives from industry, labor, professional organizations, and Federal -mine safety officials to discuss the future of mine safety and health training practices with the intent of developing new strategies to reduce injuries and fatalities.

During the meeting, attendees discussed the role technology will play and how it can potentially improve training through the use of virtual environments and online delivery of training.

"This type of discussion is important because a comprehensive evaluation of how we currently train miners and analysis of what may be available in the future will lead to improvements in the safety and health of our nation's miners," said Launa Mallett, Ph.D., Training Research and Development Team Leader in the Human Factors Branch at OMSHR.

During the next five years NIOSH researchers will focus on improving mine safety and health training in nine distinct areas including:

- Use of technology to make training more realistic and engaging
- Incorporating mechanisms by which trainees can provide timely feedback to instructors
- Development of effective online training delivery methods
- Incorporating trainee input and feedback in the development of training materials
- Reviewing and clarifying the requirements for mine trainer certification and develop re-certification schedules

Although some improvements in miners' safety and health training have occurred during the past decade, the fatality, injury and occupational illness rates among our nation's miners are still unacceptably high.

The ever increasing complexity of a miner's job, coupled with new regulations that must be taught in mine safety training make it increasingly difficult for trainers to adequately cover everything in the traditional 8 hour annual health and safety refresher classes.

It is very important all miners receive effective training in both routine health safety procedures as well as how to respond to mine emergencies and various non-routine hazardous situations.

OMSHR's efforts to better understand and develop new and effective training content and delivery methods will be enhanced by continued partnership with industry, labor and professional organizations. More details about all nine areas of the training strategy can be found on OMSHR's website at: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/news/safetytraining](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/news/safetytraining) Feedback on these areas is welcome.

