

Executive Summary
Proposed Rulemaking
Chapter 208 Underground Coal Mine Safety
(25 Pa. Code Chapter 208)

This rulemaking is initiated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to address underground coal mine safety and is authorized by the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act (52 P.S. §§ 690-101-690-708) (“Act”). The rulemaking is promulgated by the Board of Coal Mine Safety (Board), which is a 7-member board consisting of the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, as Chair of the Board, three members nominated by the United Mine Workers of America to represent the viewpoints of miners and three members nominated by the Pennsylvania Coal Association to represent the viewpoints of underground bituminous coal mine operators.

The Board seeks comments to the proposed amendments to the Department’s regulations which amend 25 Pa. Code Chapter 208.1 and establish Chapter 208.70 (relating to Automated External Defibrillators or (AED) to read as set forth in Annex A. This rulemaking was developed in response to a request by a concerned citizen and has been prepared at the Board’s direction.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is a portable device that uses electric shock to restore a stable heart rhythm. The proposed rulemaking package would require the placement of AEDs at various areas of an underground mine operation. Each mine site would be required to maintain one unit on the surface of the facility and on or near each coal producing section. These locations were recommended by representatives from industry and miner workers. The use of the AEDs by trained individuals will help save the lives of miners who may suffer from a heart attack while working underground. Most of the miners who work underground may be several miles away from a mine opening. Because of the dangerous conditions and the strenuous activities miners encounter, safety is a priority. AEDs are another tool that miners will have available to save a life.

The proposed rulemaking is overwhelmingly supported by both mine operators and mine workers. Mine operators already utilize AEDs at their facilities. Currently there are 36 underground bituminous coal mines in Pennsylvania. These mines employ approximately 4,420 persons. These regulations reduce the possibility that individuals working at the mines will suffer a serious or fatal heart attack. Pennsylvania would be the first state to require AEDs in underground bituminous mines.