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# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

*Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy*

Division of Mines

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## MEMORANDUM DM - 11-02

TO: All Underground Coal Mine Operators

FROM:   
Mike Willis, Acting Chief

DATE: May 2, 2011

SUBJECT: *Emergency Response Plans*

In order to continuously improve emergency capabilities, Section 45.1-161.202 of the *Coal Mine Safety Laws of Virginia* requires all underground coal mine operators to submit an emergency response plan, (ERP) for approval by the Chief of the Division of Mines. This section also provides that the Chief may require periodic updates to the operator's ERP. It has been determined that the need to update these plans exists; therefore, **all underground coal mine operators must submit an updated ERP plan** for approval by the Chief. Plans must be received by the Division of Mines at the Big Stone Gap or Lebanon offices no later than **August 1, 2011**. All underground coal mines must have the updated plan implemented by **January 1, 2012**.

To enable an effective and efficient development, review, and approval process for amending mine ERPs, DMME staff have developed a generic plan that incorporates the mandatory state requirements and any additional requirements that the Chief has determined necessary. These additional requirements have been reviewed in recent meetings with representatives of mine operators and other stakeholders. You are encouraged to use the enclosed draft to develop your mine specific ERP.

Controlling the mining process is a critical function of mine management. When an emergency occurs, it is important that mine leadership responds promptly and correctly to preserve life and property. This requires effective planning, efficient organization, and well-trained and equipped leaders who are capable of responding. Each underground mine is different and, in some cases, presents unique situations or conditions which must be considered and addressed in developing an effective ERP. Therefore, you should modify the enclosed generic plan as needed to fit your individual situations. An ERP guidance document containing key

points for each section that will help customize the generic plan to fit the needs of each individual operation is also enclosed.

In developing your ERP, please feel free to contact your assigned Division of Mines Inspector, any other Division representative, or Emergency Response Coordinator Chris Whitt ([chris.whitt@dmme.virginia.gov](mailto:chris.whitt@dmme.virginia.gov)) for assistance. You may call 276-523-8281 in the Big Stone Gap area or 276-415-9650 in the Lebanon area. Also, draft plan materials in Microsoft Word format which can be downloaded from the DMME website at <http://www.dmme.virginia.gov/DM/documents/operatormemos.shtml>.

Enclosures (2)