

Attachment E: Introductory and follow-up letters

Interview email invitation from contractor

Dear [recipient name],

On behalf of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Mine Safety and Health Research (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/index.html>), I would like to invite you to participate in a structured interview to solicit your views and experiences about barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining.

NIOSH seeks to better understand these barriers from the point of view of the organizations that must purchase, use, approve, and manufacture safety and health protection technologies. The objective is to assist NIOSH in its role in enhancing the development of technology and expediting the commercial availability and implementation of such technology. The attached letter from NIOSH provides more information about the interviews and how the information will be used.

NIOSH has contracted with [contractor name] to conduct these interviews. The interview will be conducted by telephone and is expected to take about one hour. Your responses will be kept confidential—neither your identity nor the name of your organization will be revealed to NIOSH or made public. Please respond by [date] letting me know if you are interested in participating in an interview. Participation is of course entirely voluntary, but we sincerely hope that you'll be able to assist with this important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best regards,
[sender name]

Interview invitation letter from NIOSH included as attachment to email from contractor

Dear [recipient name]:

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Mine Safety and Health Research is requesting your participation in a structured interview to help understand barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining.

The mission of the NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health Research (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/index.html>) is to eliminate mining fatalities, injuries, and illnesses through research and prevention. The MINER Act of 2006 assigned NIOSH the responsibility to enhance development of new mine safety and health protection technology and technological applications and to expedite the commercial availability and implementation of such technology. Experience to date has shown that there are many issues that the U.S. mining industry faces that create barriers to the availability and implementation of safety technologies, and we believe there are other more subtle reasons that we do not fully understand as a Government research agency.

These interviews are part of a project intended to better characterize those barriers. The goal of the interviews is to provide a more complete perspective of the barriers from the point of view of the organizations that must purchase, use, approve, and manufacture these safety technologies. The findings will be used to improve the efficacy of NIOSH's internal research efforts and the contract and grant awards that NIOSH administers under the authority of the MINER Act towards alleviating barriers and expediting the availability and implementation of technologies.

The interview will cover hazards associated with underground coal mining, currently available safety and health protection technologies and their effectiveness, and safety and health protection technology development, commercialization, and use.

We have contracted with [contractor name] to conduct these interviews. This letter is to let you know that [contractor name]'s request for you to participate in this interview is a NIOSH approved activity. Neither your identity nor the name of your organization will be revealed to NIOSH or made public. Participation is totally voluntary so do not feel pressured to participate. But we would be grateful if you found the time to take part.

Jessica E. Kogel, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Mining
2400 Century Parkway NE
Atlanta, GA 30345
404-498-2580
jkogel@cdc.gov

Interview follow-up email for non-respondents

Dear [recipient name]:

I am writing to repeat our invitation to participate in a structured interview intended to help NIOSH better understand barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this project. Please let me know by [date] if you are available to participate. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,
[sender name]

Workshop email invitation from contractor

Dear [recipient name],

On behalf of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Mine Safety and Health Research (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/index.html>), I would like to invite you to participate in workshop to prioritize barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining.

NIOSH seeks to better understand these barriers from the point of view of the organizations that must purchase, use, approve, and manufacture safety and health protection technologies. NIOSH recently conducted a series of structured interviews with representatives from stakeholder organizations (mining companies, technology suppliers, researchers, and others) to identify and understand barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining. The goal of the workshop is to refine and prioritize the barriers identified in those interviews. The overall objective is to assist NIOSH in its role in enhancing the development of technology and expediting the commercial availability and implementation of such technology. The attached letter from NIOSH provides more information about the workshop and how the information will be used.

NIOSH has contracted with [contractor name] to conduct the workshop. The one-day workshop will be held in [city] on [date]. Travel expenses will be reimbursed. Your participation will be kept confidential—neither your identity nor the name of your organization will be revealed to NIOSH or made public. Please respond by [date] letting me know if you are available to participate. Participation is of course entirely voluntary, but we sincerely hope that you'll be able to assist with this important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Best regards,
[sender name]

Workshop invitation letter from NIOSH included as attachment to email from contractor

Dear [recipient name]:

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Mine Safety and Health Research is requesting your participation in workshop to help to prioritize barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining.

The mission of the NIOSH Office of Mine Safety and Health Research (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/index.html>) is to eliminate mining fatalities, injuries, and illnesses through research and prevention. The MINER Act of 2006 assigned NIOSH the responsibility to enhance development of new mine safety and health protection technology and technological applications and to expedite the commercial availability and implementation of such technology. Experience to date has shown that there are many issues that the U.S. mining industry faces that create barriers to the availability and implementation of safety technologies, and we believe there are other more subtle reasons that we do not fully understand as a Government research agency.

This workshop is part of a project intended to better characterize those barriers. NIOSH recently conducted a series of structured interviews with representatives from stakeholder organizations (mining companies, technology suppliers, researchers, and others) to identify and understand barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining. This workshop will use the findings from those interviews as starting material and endeavor to prioritize the barriers. The workshop will use the Delphi method, in which a consensus is sought through sharing de-identified responses from participants, discussing the differences, and then allowing participants to update their responses after the discussion. The sharing and updating cycle can be repeated as necessary.

The goal of the workshop is to provide a more complete perspective of the barriers from the point of view of the organizations that must purchase, use, approve, and manufacture these safety technologies. The findings will be used to improve the efficacy of NIOSH's internal research efforts and the contract and grant awards that NIOSH administers under the authority of the MINER Act towards alleviating barriers and expediting the availability and implementation of technologies.

We have contracted with [contractor name] to conduct this workshop. This letter is to let you know that [contractor name]'s request for you to participate in this workshop is a NIOSH approved activity. Participation in the workshop will be kept confidential—neither your identity nor the name of your organization will be revealed to NIOSH or made public. Participation is totally voluntary so do not feel pressured to participate. But we would be grateful if you found the time to take part.

Jessica E. Kogel, Ph.D.
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Workshop follow-up email for non-respondents

Dear [recipient name]:

I am writing to repeat our invitation to participate in a workshop intended to help NIOSH prioritize barriers to the development and use of safety and health protection technologies for underground coal mining. The workshop will be held in [city] on [date]. We would greatly appreciate your participation in this project. Please let me know by [date] if you are available to participate. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,
[sender name]