

**Comments of the United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing,
Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union (USW)
on the
Mine Safety and Health Administration's Proposed Revision
on
Hazardous Communication
Docket Number: MSHA-2025-0077
Regulation Identification Number: 1219-AC08
July 31, 2025**

The USW is the predominant labor union in North American metal and non-metal mining, representing approximately 20,000 miners in the United States and an equivalent number in Canada. Our members work in underground and surface mines and quarries, utilizing various mining methods and equipment to extract almost every commodity. The exception is coal, and while our members in the United States are not exposed to the hazards of mining coal, they do face every other health and safety hazard in the mining environment.

The proposed rule can be improved, and the USW offers our recommendations in several key areas:

Why USW Opposes This Change:

1. Miners Work in Environments Where Electronic Access Is Often Unavailable

Mines are unique and often extreme work environments. Wi-Fi and cellular access are not guaranteed underground or in remote operations. Relying solely on electronic access assumes that miners have immediate, reliable, and private access to devices or the internet, which is not the reality for most miners during their shifts. We strongly oppose the proposed revision that would eliminate the current requirement for mine operators to provide hard copies of updated Hazard Communication (HazCom) materials to miners and their designated representatives. While electronic access can be a useful supplemental tool, it must not replace the baseline right to a physical copy, especially when workers' health and safety are at stake.

2. Electronic Access Can Create Barriers, Not Solutions

While this revision claims to improve access, it risks doing the opposite—by putting HazCom materials behind digital platforms that are not user-friendly, not easily accessible on the job, or that require employer-provided devices or accounts. Miners and their representatives should not have to request access, navigate through a portal, or rely on the company's discretion to access critical safety information that directly impacts their health.

3. Erodes the Miner's Right to Information

Hazard communication is a cornerstone of workplace safety. Revising this rule to allow only electronic distribution erodes transparency and weakens accountability. The existing requirement—providing hard copies of every revision—ensures that miners and their representatives have a permanent, physical, tamper-proof record of chemical hazards they may be exposed to.

4. Let Miners Choose – Preserve the Right to a Hard Copy

We urge MSHA to maintain the existing language and explicitly protect a miner's right to receive hard copies of HazCom revisions upon request, without barriers or delays. Digital options may supplement, but must never substitute a miner's right to a tangible, easily reviewable, and durable document.

USW believes miners' rights to information must be maintained. No cost savings or digital convenience should come at the expense of a miner's health or access to life-saving information. Let the miners and their representatives choose. Do not take away their right to a hard copy.

Respectfully submitted,

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