

## SUBCHAPTER L—PERMANENT PROGRAM INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

### PART 840—STATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY: INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

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AUTHORITY: 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 47 FR 35633, Aug. 16, 1982, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 840.1 Scope.

This part sets forth the minimum requirements for the Secretary's approval of the provisions for inspection and enforcement by a State of surface coal mining and reclamation operations and of coal exploration operations which substantially disturb the natural land surface, where a State is the regulatory authority under an approved State program.

#### § 840.10 Information collection.

(a) The collections of information contained in part 840 have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.* and assigned clearance number 1029-0051. The information is being collected by States for use in assessing penalties as evidence in enforcement cases and as an inspection management record. The obligation to respond is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*

(b) Public reporting burden for this information is estimated to average 3.7 hours per response, including the time for the reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of infor-

mation, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer (MS-202), 1951 Constitution Ave, NW., Washington, DC 20240.

[59 FR 60883, Nov. 28, 1994, as amended at 75 FR 60276, Sept. 29, 2010]

#### § 840.11 Inspections by State regulatory authority.

(a) The State regulatory authority shall conduct an average of at least one partial inspection per month of each active surface coal mining and reclamation operation under its jurisdiction, and shall conduct such partial inspections of each inactive surface coal mining and reclamation operation under its jurisdiction as are necessary to ensure effective enforcement of the approved State program. A partial inspection is an on-site or aerial review of a person's compliance with some of the permit conditions and requirements imposed under an approved State program.

(b) The State regulatory authority shall conduct an average of at least one complete inspection per calendar quarter of each active or inactive surface coal mining and reclamation operation under its jurisdiction. A complete inspection is an on-site review of a person's compliance with all permit conditions and requirements imposed under the State program, within the entire area disturbed or affected by the surface coal mining and reclamation operations.

(c) The State regulatory authority shall conduct such inspections of coal explorations as are necessary to ensure compliance with the approved State program.

(d)(1) Aerial inspections shall be conducted in a manner which reasonably ensures the identification and documentation of conditions at each surface coal mining and reclamation site inspected.

(2) Any potential violation observed during an aerial inspection shall be investigated on site within three days:

provided, that any indication of a condition, practice or violation constituting cause for the issuance of a cessation order under section 521(a)(2) of the Act shall be investigated on site immediately, *And provided further*, That an on-site investigation of a potential violation observed during an aerial inspection shall not be considered to be an additional partial or complete inspection for the purposes of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

(e) The inspections required under paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of this section shall:

(1) Be carried out on an irregular basis, so as to monitor compliance at all operations, including those which operate nights, weekends, or holidays;

(2) Occur without prior notice to the permittee or any agent or employee of such permittee, except for necessary on-site meetings; and

(3) Include the prompt filing of inspection reports adequate to enforce the requirements of the approved State program.

(f) For the purposes of this section, an inactive surface coal mining and reclamation operation is one for which:

(1) The State regulatory authority has secured from the permittee the written notice provided for under §816.131(b) or §817.131(b) of this chapter; or

(2) Reclamation Phase II as defined at §800.40 of this chapter has been completed and the liability of the permittee has been reduced by the State regulatory authority in accordance with the State program.

(g) Abandoned site means a surface coal mining and reclamation operation for which the regulatory authority has found in writing that:

(1) All surface and underground coal mining and reclamation activities at the site have ceased;

(2) The regulatory authority or the Office has issued at least one notice of violation or the initial program equivalent, and either:

(i) Is unable to serve the notice despite diligent efforts to do so; or

(ii) The notice was served and has progressed to a failure-to-abate cessation order or the initial program equivalent;

(3) The regulatory authority:

(i) Is taking action to ensure that the permittee and operator, and owners and controllers of the permittee and operator, will be precluded from receiving future permits while violations continue at the site; and

(ii) Is taking action pursuant to section 518(e), 518(f), 521(a)(4) or 521(c) of the Act or their regulatory program counterparts to ensure that abatement occurs or that there will not be a recurrence of the failure-to-abate, except where after evaluating the circumstances it concludes that further enforcement offers little or no likelihood of successfully compelling abatement or recovering any reclamation costs; and

(4) Where the site is, or was, permitted and bonded:

(i) The permit has either expired or been revoked; and

(ii) The regulatory authority has initiated and is diligently pursuing forfeiture of, or has forfeited, any available performance bond.

(h) In lieu of the inspection frequency established in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, the regulatory authority shall inspect each abandoned site on a set frequency commensurate with the public health and safety and environmental considerations present at each specific site, but in no case shall the inspection frequency be set at less than one complete inspection per calendar year.

(1) In selecting an alternate inspection frequency authorized under the paragraph above, the regulatory authority shall first conduct a complete inspection of the abandoned site and provide public notice under paragraph (h)(2) of this section. Following the inspection and public notice, the regulatory authority shall prepare and maintain for public review a written finding justifying the alternative inspection frequency selected. This written finding shall justify the new inspection frequency by affirmatively addressing in detail all of the following criteria:

(i) How the site meets each of the criteria under the definition of an abandoned site under paragraph (g) of this section and thereby qualifies for a reduction in inspection frequency;

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(ii) Whether, and to what extent, there exist on the site impoundments, earthen structures or other conditions that pose, or may reasonably be expected to ripen into, imminent dangers to the health or safety of the public or significant environmental harms to land, air, or water resources;

(iii) The extent to which existing impoundments or earthen structures were constructed and certified in accordance with prudent engineering designs approved in the permit;

(iv) The degree to which erosion and sediment control is present and functioning;

(v) The extent to which the site is located near or above urbanized areas, communities, occupied dwellings, schools and other public or commercial buildings and facilities;

(vi) The extent of reclamation completed prior to abandonment and the degree of stability of unreclaimed areas, taking into consideration the physical characteristics of the land mined and the extent of settlement or revegetation that has occurred naturally with them; and

(vii) Based on a review of the complete and partial inspection report record for the site during at least the last two consecutive years, the rate at which adverse environmental or public health and safety conditions have and can be expected to progressively deteriorate.

(2) The public notice and opportunity to comment required under paragraph (h)(1) of this section shall be provided as follows:

(i) The regulatory authority shall place a notice in the newspaper with the broadest circulation in the locality of the abandoned site providing the public with a 30-day period in which to submit written comments.

(ii) The public notice shall contain the permittee's name, the permit number, the precise location of the land affected, the inspection frequency proposed, the general reasons for reducing the inspection frequency, the bond status of the permit, the telephone number and address of the regulatory authority where written comments on the reduced inspection frequency may

be submitted, and the closing date of the comment period.

(Pub. L. 95-87, 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*)

[47 FR 35633, Aug. 16, 1983, as amended at 48 FR 44781, Sept. 30, 1983; 53 FR 24882, June 30, 1988; 59 FR 60883, Nov. 28, 1994]

### § 840.12 Right of entry.

(a) Within its jurisdiction, the State regulatory authority shall have authority that grants its representatives a right of entry to, upon, and through any coal exploration or surface coal mining and reclamation operation without advance notice upon presentation of appropriate credentials. No search warrant shall be required, except that a State may provide for its use with respect to entry into a building.

(b) The State regulatory authority shall have authority that authorizes its representatives to inspect any monitoring equipment or method of exploration or operation and to have access to and copy any records required under the approved State program. This authority shall provide that the representatives may exercise such rights at reasonable times, without advance notice, upon presentation of appropriate credentials. No search warrant shall be required, except that a State may provide for its use with respect to entry into a building.

### § 840.13 Enforcement authority.

(a) The civil and criminal penalty provisions of each State program shall contain penalties which are no less stringent than those set forth in section 518 of the Act and shall be consistent with 30 CFR part 845.

(b) The enforcement provisions of each State program shall contain sanctions which are no less stringent than those set forth in section 521 of the Act and shall be consistent with §§ 843.11, 843.12, 843.13, and subchapters G and J of this chapter.

(c) The procedural requirements of each State program relating to the penalties and sanctions mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section shall be the same as or similar to those provided in sections 518 and 521 of the Act, respectively, and consistent with