

National Park Service, Interior

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unreasonable economic burden or injury to the operator. Such work must be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, and in a manner prescribed by the Regional Director and designed to minimize or prevent significant environmental effects.

(h) Approval of each plan of operations is expressly conditioned upon the Superintendent having such reasonable access to the claim as is necessary to properly monitor and insure compliance with the plan of operations.

§ 9.11 Reclamation requirements.

(a) As contemporaneously as possible with the operations, but in no case later than six (6) months after completion of operations and within the time specified in an approved mining reclamation plan, unless a longer period is authorized in writing by the Regional Director, each operator shall initiate reclamation as follows:

(1) Where the claim was patented without surface use restriction, the operator shall at a minimum:

(i) Remove all above ground structures, equipment, and other manmade debris used for operations; and

(ii) Rehabilitate the area of operations to a condition which would not constitute a nuisance; or would not adversely affect, injure or damage, federally owned lands.

(2) On any claim which was patented with surface use restrictions or is unpatented, each operator must take steps to restore natural conditions and processes, which steps shall include, but are not limited to:

(i) Removing all above ground structures, equipment and other manmade debris;

(ii) Providing for the prevention of surface subsidence;

(iii) Replacing overburden and spoil, wherever economically and technologically practicable;

(iv) Grading to reasonably conform the contour of the area of operations to a contour similar to that which existed prior to the initiation of operations, where such grading will not jeopardize reclamation;

(v) Replacing the natural topsoil necessary for vegetative restoration; and

(vi) Reestablishing native vegetative communities.

(b) Reclamation under paragraph (a)(2) of this section is unacceptable unless it provides for the safe movement of native wildlife, the reestablishment of native vegetative communities, the normal flow of surface and reasonable flow of subsurface waters, the return of the area to a condition which does not jeopardize visitor safety or public use of the unit, and return of the area to a condition equivalent to its pristine beauty.

(c) Reclamation required by this section shall apply to operations authorized under this part, except that all terms relating to reclamation of previously issued special use permits revoked by this part for operations to be continued under an approved plan of operations shall be incorporated into the operator's reclamation plans.

§ 9.12 Supplementation or revision of plan of operations.

(a) An approved plan of operations may require reasonable revision or supplementation to adjust the plan to changed conditions or to correct oversights.

(1) The Regional Director may initiate an alteration by notifying the operator in writing of the proposed alteration and the justification therefor. The operator shall have thirty (30) days to comment on the proposal.

(2) The operator may initiate an alteration by submitting to the Superintendent a written statement of the proposal, and the justification therefor.

(b) Any proposal initiated under paragraph (a) of this section by either party shall be reviewed and decided by the Regional Director in accordance with § 9.10. Where the operator believes he has been aggrieved by a decision under this paragraph, he may appeal the decision pursuant to § 9.14.

§ 9.13 Performance bond.

(a) Upon approval of a plan of operations the operator shall be required to file a suitable performance bond with satisfactory surety, payable to the Secretary or his designee. The bond shall be conditioned upon faithful compliance with applicable regulations, the terms and conditions of the permit,

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lease, or contract, and the plan of operations as approved, revised or supplemented.

(b) In lieu of a performance bond, an operator may elect to deposit with the Secretary, or his designee, cash or negotiable bonds of the U.S. Government. The cash deposit or the market value of such securities shall be at least equal to the required sum of the bond.

(c) The bond or security deposit shall be in an amount equal to the estimated cost of completion of reclamation requirements either in their entirety or in a phased schedule for their completion as set forth in the approved, supplemented or revised plan of operations.

(d) In the event that an approved plan of operations is revised or supplemented in accordance with §9.12, the Superintendent may adjust the amount of the bond or security deposit to conform to the plan of operations as modified.

(e) The operator's and his surety's responsibility and liability under the bond or security deposit shall continue until such time as the Superintendent determines that successful reclamation of the area of operations has occurred.

(f) When all required reclamation requirements of an approved plan of operations are completed, the Superintendent shall notify the operator that performance under the bond or security deposit has been completed and that it is released.

§9.14 Appeals.

(a) Any operator aggrieved by a decision of the Regional Director in connection with the regulations in this part may file with the Regional Director a written statement setting forth in detail the respects in which the decision is contrary to, or in conflict with, the facts, the law, these regulations, or is otherwise in error. No such appeal will be considered unless it is filed with the Regional Director within thirty (30) days after the date of notification to the operator of the action or decision complained of. Upon receipt of such written statement from the aggrieved operator, the Regional Director shall promptly review the action or decision and either reverse his original decision or prepare his own statement,

explaining that decision and the reasons therefor, and forward the statement and record on appeal to the Director, National Park Service, for review and decision. Copies of the Regional Director's statement shall be furnished to the aggrieved operator, who shall have 20 days within which to file exceptions to the Regional Director's decision. The Department has the discretion to initiate a hearing before the Office of Hearing and Appeals in a particular case. (See 43 CFR 4.700.)

(b) The official files of the National Park Service on the proposed plan of operations and any testimony and documents submitted by the parties on which the decision of the Regional Director was based shall constitute the record on appeal. The Regional Director shall maintain the record under separate cover and shall certify that it is the record on which his decision was based at the time it is forwarded to the Director of the National Park Service. The National Park Service shall make the record available to the operator upon request.

(c) If the Director considers the record inadequate to support the decision on appeal, he may provide for the production of such additional evidence or information as may be appropriate, or may remand the case to the Regional Director, with appropriate instructions for further action.

(d) On or before the expiration of forty-five (45) days after his receipt of the exceptions to the Regional Director's decision, the Director shall make his decision in writing; *Provided, however*, That if more than forty-five (45) days are required for a decision after the exceptions are received, the Director shall notify the parties to the appeal and specify the reason(s) for delay. The decision of the Director shall include (1) a statement of facts, (2) conclusions, and (3) reasons upon which the conclusions are based. The decision of the Director shall be the final administrative action of the agency on a proposed plan of operations.

(e) A decision of the Regional Director from which an appeal is taken shall not be automatically stayed by the filing of a statement of appeal. A request for a stay may accompany the statement of appeal or may be directed to