

Proposed Rulemaking: Standards for Surface Facilities

Summary of the Rulemaking:

This proposed rulemaking will allow for the implementation of existing federal regulations that broadly relate to the surface work areas of underground bituminous coal mines and govern surface installations, thermal dryers, safeguards for mechanical equipment, electrical equipment, trailing cables, grounding, surface high-voltage distribution, low- and medium-voltage alternating currents, ground control, fire protection, maps, personnel hoisting, wire ropes, trolley wires and trolley feeder wires, and slope and shaft sinking. As a result, the existing federal regulations will become independently enforceable by the Commonwealth. Adopting these proposed regulations will ensure that surface operations at underground bituminous coal mine sites are safely conducted and maintained. Although underground bituminous coal mine operators are already required to comply with these regulations, implementing this proposed rulemaking will provide Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with the independent authority to enforce the federal requirements. This will result in improved efficiency and enhanced autonomy for the Commonwealth.

Rulemaking Timeline:

- Adopted by the Board of Coal Mine Safety (BCMS) at its June 10, 2014 meeting.
- Published for comment in the August 2, Pennsylvania Bulletin.
- Public comment period closed on September 2, 2014. No comments were received from the public pertaining to this rulemaking.
- Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) has until October 2, 2014 to provide their comments pertaining to this rulemaking.
- Once IRRC comments received and reviewed, final rulemaking package can be developed.
- Final rulemaking anticipated to be presented to the BCMS at its first meeting of 2015.
- Publication anticipated for summer of 2015. Rulemaking will be effective upon publication.