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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Active and Abandoned Mine Operations

Final-Omitted Rulemaking: Blast Site Clarification for Noncoal Mining Operations

Environmental Quality Board Meeting
November 12, 2024

Josh Shapiro, Governor

Jessica Shirley, Acting Secretary

Purpose

- Noncoal mine operators must conduct blasting in compliance with the noncoal mining regulations in Chapter 77 and the storage, handling and use of explosives regulations in Chapter 211.
- Under § 77.561(c), blasting operations shall be conducted in compliance with Chapter 211.
- The rulemaking will correct an inconsistency in use of terms “blast site” and “blast area.”







Background

- 1990 – § 77.564(g)(7): Uses the term “blast area” throughout provision
- 2001 – Blast area and blast site defined in Chapter 211
 - Blast site: location where charges are loaded into the holes
 - Blast area: area around the blast site that must be cleared to ensure safety



Blast Site/Blast Area

-  Blast area (50-ft. buffer)
-  Blast area
-  Blast site
-  Blast site (50-ft. buffer)



Amendment to § 77.564(g)(7)

When explosives are being loaded in drill holes in preparation for a shot, work within a radius of 50 feet of the blast **[area] site** shall cease, and machinery shall be brought to a complete rest.



Final-Omitted Rulemaking Process

- Minor, uncontroversial, and does not amend current practice because the regulated community is already adhering to the blasting safety regulations in Chapter 211
- Substantial public interest served by ensuring safety standards for blasting in Chapters 77 and 211 are consistent and enforceable



Outreach

- The Department discussed the draft blast site clarification amendment with the Aggregate Advisory Board on August 28, 2024.
- The Department also notified the noncoal mining operators and blasting contractors of the pending regulatory change.



Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Board adopt this final-omitted regulation.





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