

MINING OPERATIONS PROGRAM

DEP's Office of Active and Abandoned Mining Operations is responsible for the policies and implementation of programs that regulate or minimize the impact from the extraction of coal and noncoal (industrial minerals). The office is organized into four Bureaus that have distinct roles and responsibilities for the safe extraction of mineral resources and the reclamation and protection of environmental resources. The Bureau of District Mining Operations is responsible for permitting and inspection of mining sites across Pennsylvania.

To control impacts to water, the six District Mining Offices issue NPDES discharge permits for active mining operations. For qualifying operations managing stormwater only, in lieu of an individual NPDES permit, the mine permittee may obtain coverage under the General Permit for Stormwater Associated with Mining Activities (BMP-GP-104) which requires implementation of best management practices for erosion and sediment control, to stabilize all areas where earth disturbance is conducted, and manage post-construction stormwater rate and volume. The District Mining Offices conduct regular inspections of mining operations to control water impacts and to ensure that any impacts are corrected in a timely manner.

Individual NPDES permits are reviewed and issued in conjunction with new coal and noncoal mining permits and in conjunction with the renewal of coal mining permits, which, like NPDES permits, also have a 5-year term. Noncoal mining permits are issued without a term limit and do not expire so there is no renewal of a noncoal mining permit related to the NPDES renewal. Modifications to the NPDES permits are often in conjunction with mining permit revisions and are reviewed and issued in that context. The latest BMP-GP-104 was issued in March 2021 and will expire in March 2026. There are approximately 6290 individual NPDES permits active at any time related to active mining activities (5395 coal and 895 noncoal) and approximately 1266 facilities with coverage under the BMP-GP-104 (307 coal and 959 noncoal).

Updates to the permit applications and program are managed by the Bureau of Mining Programs.

Table 1. Overview of the Active Mining Operations Statistics

	FFY18/19	FFY 19/20	FFY20/21	FFY21/22
NPDES Individual Permits				
New Coal	28	14	14	10
New Noncoal (Ind Minerals)	24	21	13	27
Renew Coal	111	119	96	89
Renew Noncoal	63	51	64	80
Total	226	205	187	206
Approximate Fees Collected	\$139,000	\$195,000	\$107,000	\$121,500
GP-104 Stormwater Only				
Coal	39	31	7	13
Noncoal	95	64	46	75
Total	134	95	53	88
Approximate Fees Collected	\$33,500	\$23,750	\$13,250	\$22,000
Enforcement				
Inspections	5,050	5,002	5,519	5,003
Violations	380	482	238	260
Penalties Collected	\$261,233	\$289,395	\$344,882	\$518,618