

**PART 716—SPECIAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

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SOURCE: 42 FR 62691, Dec. 13, 1977, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 716.1 General obligations.**

(a) This part establishes special initial performance standards that apply in the following special circumstances—

- (1) § 716.2 applies to surface coal mining operations on steep slopes.
- (2) § 716.3 applies to surface coal mining operations involving mountaintop removal.
- (3) § 716.4 applies to special bituminous coal mines.
- (4) § 716.5 applies to anthracite surface coal mining operations.
- (5) § 716.6 applies to surface coal mining operations in Alaska.
- (6) § 716.7 applies to surface coal mining operations on prime farmlands.

(b) All surface coal mining and reclamation operations subject to this part shall comply with the applicable special performance standards in this part. Such operations shall also comply with all general performance standards in part 715 of this chapter unless specifically exempted *in this part* from the requirements of part 715.

**§ 716.2 Steep-slope mining.**

The permittee conducting surface coal mining and reclamation operations on natural slopes that exceed 20 degrees, or on lesser slopes that require measures to protect the area from disturbance, as determined by the regulatory authority after consideration of soils, climate, the method of operation, geology, and other regional characteristics, shall meet the following performance standards. The standards of this section do not apply where mining is done on a flat or gently rolling ter-

rain with an occasional steep slope through which the mining proceeds and leaves a plain or predominantly flat area; or where the mining is governed by § 716.3.

(a) Spoil, waste materials or debris, including that from clearing and grubbing, and abandoned or disabled equipment, shall not be placed or allowed to remain on the downslope.

(b) The highwall shall be completely covered with spoil and the disturbed are a graded to comply with the provisions of § 715.14 of this chapter. Land above the highwall shall not be disturbed unless the regulatory authority finds that the disturbance will facilitate compliance with the requirements of this section.

(c) Material in excess of that required to meet the provisions of § 715.14 of this chapter shall be disposed of in accordance with the requirements of § 715.15 of this chapter.

(d) Woody materials may be buried in the backfilled area only when burial does not cause, or add to, instability of the backfill. Woody materials may be chipped and distributed through the backfill when approved by the regulatory authority.

(e) *Variances from approximate original contour restoration requirements.* (1) This section applies to surface coal mining operations on steep slopes where the operation is not to be reclaimed to achieve the approximate original contour and is not a mountaintop removal operation.

(2) The objective of this subsection is to allow for a variance from the approximate original contour restoration requirements on steep slopes to—

(i) Improve watershed control of the area; and

(ii) Allow the land to be used for an industrial, commercial, residential, or public use, including recreational facilities.

(3) The regulatory authority may grant a variance from the requirement for restoration of the affected lands to their approximate original contour only if it first finds, in writing, on the basis of a showing made by the permittee, that all of the following requirements are met:

(i) The permittee has demonstrated that the purpose of the variance is to

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make the lands to be affected within the permit area suitable for an industrial, commercial, residential, or public use postmining land use and that the proposed industrial, commercial, residential, or public use is likely to occur.

(ii) The proposed use, after consultation with the appropriate land-use planning agencies, if any, constitutes an equal or better economic or public use.

(iii) The permittee has demonstrated that compliance with the requirements for acceptable alternative postmining industrial, commercial, residential or public land uses of 30 CFR 715.13 has been achieved except for the requirement at §715.13(d)(3) and (4) to provide letters of commitment. The permittee must demonstrate to the regulatory authority that necessary public facilities are likely to be provided and that the plan is financially feasible.

(iv) The permittee has demonstrated that the watershed of the area will be improved as compared to the condition of the watershed before mining. The watershed will be deemed improved only if—

(A) There will be a reduction in the amount of total suspended solids or other pollutants discharged to ground or surface waters from the area as compared to such discharges; or, there will be reduced flood hazards or more even flow within the watershed containing the area due to reduction of the peak flow discharges from precipitation events or thaws; or any other criterion authority in the granting of the variance. While improving one or more variables, the permittee must also at least maintain the variables not improved at their premining levels;

(B) The total volume of flows from the proposed affected lands, during every season of the year, will not vary in a way that adversely affects the ecology of any surface water or any existing or planned use of surface or ground water; and

(C) The appropriate State environmental agency approves the plan.

(v) The permittee has demonstrated that the owner of the surface of the lands within the permit area has knowingly requested, in writing, as a part of the application, that a variance be

granted. The request shall be made separately from any surface owner consent given for the operation and shall show an understanding that the variance could not be granted without the surface owner's request.

(vi) The proposal is designed and certified by a qualified registered professional engineer in conformance with professional standards established to assure the stability, drainage, and configuration necessary for the intended use of the site.

(vii) All other requirements of the Act and these regulations will be met by the proposed operations.

(4) Every permittee who obtains a variance under this subsection shall:

(i) Backfill completely the highwall with spoil material, in a manner which results in a static factor of safety of at least 1.3 using general geotechnical analysis.

(ii) Improve the watershed control of the area by reducing the peak flow from precipitation or thaw or reducing the total suspended solids or other pollutants in the surface water discharge during precipitation or thaw or by attaining the criteria approved by the regulatory authority in the granting of the variance. While improving one or more variables, the permittee must also at least maintain the variables not improved at their premining levels. The total volume of flow during every season of the year shall not vary in a way that adversely affects the ecology of any surface or ground water.

(iii) Disturb land above the highwall only to the extent that the regulatory authority deems appropriate and approves as necessary to facilitate compliance with the provisions of this section. The regulatory authority may authorize such a disturbance above the highwall if it finds the disturbance is necessary to—

(A) Blend the solid highwall and the backfilled material; or

(B) Control surface runoff; or

(C) Provide access to the area above the highwall.

(iv) Place off the mine bench no more than the amount of spoil necessary to achieve the postmining land use, ensure the stability of spoil retained on the bench, and meet all other requirements of the Act and parts 710 through

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725 of this chapter. All spoil not retained on the bench shall be placed in accordance with the Act and these regulations.

(5) The regulatory authority shall review every variance granted pursuant to this subsection not more than three years from the date of issuance of the permit to ensure that the proposed alternative postmining use is proceeding in accordance with the terms of the approved plan, unless the permittee affirmatively so demonstrates.

[42 FR 62691, Dec. 13, 1977, as amended at 45 FR 83168, Dec. 17, 1980]

### § 716.3 Mountaintop removal.

(a) Surface coal mining and reclamation operations that remove entire coal seams running through the upper fraction of a mountain, ridge, or hill by removing all of the overburden and creating a level plateau or gently rolling contour with no highwalls remaining are exempt from the requirements of § 715.14 of this chapter for achieving approximate original contour, if the following requirements are met:

(1) An industrial, commercial, agricultural, residential, or public facility (including recreational facilities) use is proposed for the affected land.

(2) The alternative land use criteria in § 715.13(d) of this chapter are met and the proposal is approved by the regulatory authority.

(3) All other applicable requirements of part 715 of this chapter can be met.

(b) Surface coal mining and reclamation operations conducted under this section shall comply with the following standards:

(1) An outcrop barrier of sufficient width consisting of the toe of the lowest coal seam, and its associated overburden shall be retained to prevent slides and erosion.

(2) The final graded top plateau slopes on the mined area shall be less than 1v:5h so as to create a level plateau or gently rolling configuration and the outcrops of the plateau shall not exceed 1v:2h, except where engineering data substantiates and the regulatory authority finds that a minimum static safety factor of 1.5 will be attained.

(3) The resulting level or gently rolling contour shall be graded to drain in-

ward from the outslope except at specific points where it drains over the outslope in protected stable channels.

(4) Damage to natural watercourses below the area to be mined shall be prevented.

(5) Spoil shall be placed on the mountaintop bench as is necessary to achieve the postmining land use approved under § 715.13 of this chapter. All excess spoil material not retained on the mountaintop shall be placed in accordance with the standards of § 715.15 of this chapter.

(c)(1) All permits giving approval for mountaintop removal shall be reviewed not more than 3 years from the date of issuance of the permit, unless the permittee affirmatively demonstrates and the regulatory authority finds that all operations are proceeding in accordance with the terms of the permit and applicable requirements of the Act and the regulations of this part. The terms of the permit shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the regulations of this part.

(2) The terms of a permit for mountaintop removal may be modified by the regulatory authority if it determines that more stringent measures are necessary to prevent or control slides and erosion, prevent damage to natural water courses, avoid water pollution, or to assure successful revegetation.

### § 716.4 Special bituminous coal mines.

(a) *Definition.* Special bituminous coal surface mines as used in this section means those bituminous coal surface mines that are located in the State of Wyoming and that are being mined or will be mined according to the following criteria:

(1) Excavation of the mine pit takes place on a relatively limited site for an extended period of time. For the purposes of this section, mine pit means an open-pit mine in which the surface opening is at least the full size of the excavation and has a contiguous border. The pit generally is quite deep and is formed by the removal of relatively large amounts of overburden to obtain lesser amounts of coal. The term as used in this section applies only to mining operations that extract coal

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from seams dipping 15 degrees or more from the horizontal.

(2) Excavation of the mine pit follows a coal seam that inclines 15 degrees or more from the horizontal, and as the excavation proceeds downward it expands laterally to maintain stability of the pitwall or as necessary to accommodate the orderly expansion of the total mining operations.

(3)(i) Surface coal mining operations in the mine pit have taken place since January 1, 1972, and

(A) Operations in the mine pit are removing more than one coal seam, and

(B) Mining has begun on the deepest coal seam scheduled to be mined; or

(ii) Surface coal mining operations which may be developed after August 3, 1977, and are conducted on lands immediately adjacent to operations meeting the criteria of paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section.

(4) The amount of material removed from the pit is large in proportion to the surface area disturbed.

(5) There is no practicable alternative to the deep open-pit method of mining the coal.

(6) There is no practicable way to entirely reclaim the land as required by part 715 of this chapter.

(b) *Requirements for special bituminous coal mines operating prior to July 1, 1973.* Those portions of a special bituminous coal mine approved for operation prior to July 1, 1973, including the orderly expansion of such a mine pit to the extent authorized by State law, shall at a minimum meet the general performance standards of part 715 of this chapter for all operations conducted on the permit area outside the mine pit and for those operations associated with spoil storage areas. The standards of part 715 also apply to the mine pit with the exception of §715.14, which relates to backfilling and grading. Special requirements for backfilling and grading the mine pit area are as follows:

(1) In the final mine area, highwalls will be allowed to remain and benches will be allowed. Details of the benches shall be included in the mine plans submitted to the regulatory authority for approval.

(2) The exposed pit floors will be sloped and graded to provide access to the area, and topsoil shall be applied

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and the floor area seeded according to the requirements of §§715.16 and 715.20. Where water impoundments are included as part of the mine plan, riprap may be used if necessary to prevent erosion.

(3) Spoil piles will be graded and contoured with no more than overall slope of 17 degrees allowed, and terraces may be used to break the slope when it can be shown that terraces will accomplish the required reclamation. For the postmining land use, steeper slopes may be permitted upon approval of the regulatory authority, provided it can be demonstrated that such method will provide the required results.

(c) *Requirements for other special bituminous coal mines.* Those portions of a special bituminous coal mine which do not meet the criteria of paragraph (b) of this section shall, at minimum meet the general performance standards of part 715 of this chapter for all operations conducted on the permit area outside the mine pit and for these operations associated with spoil storage areas. The standards of part 715 also apply to the mine pit with the exception of §715.14, which relates to backfilling and grading. Special requirements for backfilling and grading the mine pit area are as follows:

(1) *Slope specifications.* Slope specifications for the postmining land use shall be based on an average of the natural slopes measured in the immediate area of the mine site, and the maximum inclination of the slopes in the reclaimed area shall not be greater than this average slope. However, slopes steeper than the average of the natural slopes may be approved by the regulatory authority if it can be demonstrated that returning the mined area to a slope equal to or less than the average natural slope would greatly increase the amount of disturbed land. Measurements of individual slopes, locations at which measurements are made, and the average natural slope as determined from the individual slope measurements shall be submitted for approval to the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority may make an independent slope survey to verify the average natural slope.

(2) *Postmining land uses that do not include permanent water impoundments.* (i)

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The final mine area shall be backfilled, graded, and contoured to the extent necessary to return the land to the use approved by the regulatory authority.

(ii) All backfilling, grading, and contouring shall be done in a manner to preserve the original drainage system or to provide substitute drainage systems approved by the regulatory authority.

(iii) Terraces or benches may be used only if it can be demonstrated that contouring methods will not provide the required results. Detailed plans of dimensions and design of the terraces or benches, check dams, erosion prevention techniques, and slopes of the terraces or benches and their intervals shall be submitted to the regulatory authority for approval before construction.

(iv) Depressions that will accumulate water shall not be allowed unless they are approved under paragraph (3).

(3) *Postmining land uses that include permanent water impoundments.* (i) The exposed mine pit area shall be sloped, graded, and contoured to blend with the topography of the surrounding terrain and to provide for access to the area. Where necessary to prevent erosion, riprap shall be used.

(ii) Under certain conditions where it can be demonstrated by the permittee that the pitwall can be stabilized by terracing or other techniques it may be permissible to leave one-half the proposed shoreline, as measured along the circumference, composed of the stabilized pitwall. The remaining part of the shoreline shall be graded and contoured to blend with the topography of the surrounding terrain and to provide access to the area. Detailed explanations of the techniques to be used to stabilize the pitwalls shall be submitted for approval to the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority may verify the effectiveness of the proposed stabilization techniques from a study made by an independent engineering company and based on this information and an onsite inspection, the regulatory authority will then determine the acceptability of the proposed stabilization techniques.

(d) In the event of an amendment or revision to the State of Wyoming's regulatory program, regulations, or deci-

sions made thereunder governing special bituminous coal mines, the Secretary shall issue such additional regulations as necessary to meet the purposes of the Act.

### §716.5 Anthracite coal mines.

(a) Permittees of anthracite surface coal mining and reclamation operations in those States where the mines are regulated by State environmental protection standards shall be subject to the environmental protection standards of the State regulatory program in existence on August 3, 1977, instead of part 715 and part 717 of this chapter.

(b) The environmental protection provisions of Title 25, Rules and Regulations, part 1, Department of Environmental Resources, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, shall apply to reclamation of anthracite surface coal mining and reclamation operations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania instead of part 715 and part 717 of this chapter. In addition, the regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pertaining to standards for air and water quality shall apply instead of the regulations of part 715 and part 717 of this chapter.

(c) If a State's regulatory program or regulations for anthracite surface coal mining and reclamation operations in force at the time of this Act are amended, the Secretary, upon receipt of a notice of amendment, shall issue additional regulations as necessary to meet the purposes of this Act.

[45 FR 61259, Sept. 15, 1980]

### §716.6 Coal mines in Alaska.

(a) Permittees of surface coal mining operations in Alaska from which coal has been mined on or after August 3, 1977, shall conduct operations in a manner that, at a minimum, meets the performance standards of this chapter.

(b) The Secretary, after consultation with the Governor of Alaska, may modify the applicability of any environmental protection standard to any surface coal mining operation if he determines that it is necessary to ensure the continued operation of the mine.

(c) Any person may petition the Secretary to modify the applicability of a performance standard to a coal mine in Alaska. No particular form of petition

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is required. However, the petition shall be in writing and shall identify clearly—

(1) The performance standard involved;

(2) The alternative methods to be used to protect the environment and public health and safety;

(3) The reasons why a modification is requested with full descriptions of the impacts continued requirements for compliance with the performance standard to be modified would have on mining and reclamation and of the impacts the proposed method would have on the environment and public health and safety; and

(4) The location of the mine.

(d) If the Secretary determines that the petition presents reasonable justification for modifying the performance standard, he may grant a temporary suspension of enforcement of the performance standard, and he shall publish a notice of intention to modify the applicability of the performance standard in the FEDERAL REGISTER and in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of Alaska where the affected coal mine is located. A public hearing shall be held in Alaska and any person may testify for or against the proposed modification. The Secretary, after considering the public comments, and consulting with the Governor of Alaska, shall publish his decision in the FEDERAL REGISTER and in the same newspaper in which the original notice was published.

### §716.7 Prime farmland.

(a) *Applicability.* (1) Permittees of surface coal mining and reclamation operations conducted on prime farmland shall comply with the general performance standards of part 715 of this chapter in addition to the special requirements of this section.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the requirements of the section are applicable to any lands covered by a permit application filed on or after August 3, 1977. This section does not apply to:

(i) Lands on which surface coal mining and reclamation operations are conducted pursuant to any permit issued prior to August 3, 1977; or

(ii) Lands on which surface coal mining and reclamation operations are conducted pursuant to any renewal or revision of a permit issued prior to August 3, 1977; or

(iii) Lands included in any existing surface coal mining operations for which a permit was issued for all or any part thereof prior to August 3, 1977, provided that:

(A) Such lands are part of a single continuous surface coal mining operation begun under a permit issued before August 3, 1977; and

(B) The permittee had a legal right to mine the lands prior to August 3, 1977, through ownership, contract, or lease but not including an option to buy, lease, or contract; and

(C) The lands contain part of a continuous recoverable coal seam that was being mined in a single continuous mining pit (or multiple pits if the lands are proven to be part of a single continuous surface coal mining operation) begun under a permit issued prior to August 3, 1977.

(3) For purposes of this section:

(i) “Renewal” of a permit shall mean a decision by the regulatory authority to extend the time by which the permittee may complete mining within the boundaries of the original permit, and “revision” of the permit shall mean a decision by the regulatory authority to allow changes in the method of mining operations within the original permit area, or the decision of the regulatory authority to allow incidental boundary changes to the original permit;

(ii) A pit shall be deemed to be a single continuous mining pit even if portions of the pit are crossed by a road, pipeline, railroad, or powerline or similar crossing;

(iii) A single continuous surface coal mining operation is presumed to consist only of a single continuous mining pit under a permit issued prior to August 3, 1977, but may include non-contiguous parcels if the operator can prove by clear and convincing evidence that, prior to August 3, 1977, the contiguous parcels were part of a single permitted operation. For the purposes of this paragraph, clear and convincing evidence includes, but is not limited to, contracts, leases, deeds or other

properly executed legal documents (not including options) that specifically treat physically separate parcels as one surface coal mining operation.

(b) *Definitions.* For purposes of this section, the following definitions are applicable.

(1) *Prime farmland* means those lands which are defined by the Secretary of Agriculture in 7 CFR 657 and which have been historically used for cropland.

(2) *Historically used for cropland* means (i) lands that have been used for cropland for any 5 years or more out of the 10 years immediately preceding the acquisition, including purchase, lease, or option, of the land for the purpose of conducting or allowing through resale, lease, or option the conduct of surface coal mining and reclamation operations; (ii) lands that the regulatory authority determines, on the basis of additional cropland history of the surrounding lands and the lands under consideration, that the permit area is clearly cropland but falls outside the specific 5-years-in-10 criterion, or (iii) lands that would likely have been used as cropland for any 5 out of the last 10 years immediately preceding such acquisition but for some fact of ownership or control of the land unrelated to the productivity of the land, in which case the regulations for prime farmland may be applied to include more years of cropland history only to increase the prime farmland acreage to be protected.

(3) *Cropland* means land used for the production of adapted crops for harvest, alone or in a rotation with grasses and legumes, and includes row crops, small grain crops, hay crops, nursery crops, orchard crops, and other similar speciality crops.

(4) The soils either have no water table or have a water table that is maintained at a sufficient depth during the cropping season to allow food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops common to the area to be grown.

(5) The soils can be managed so that in all horizons within a depth of 40 inches or in the root zone if the root zone is less than 40 inches deep, during part of each year the conductivity of saturation extract is less than 4

mmhos/cm and the exchangeable sodium percentage (ESP) is less than 15.

(6) The soils are not flooded frequently during the growing season (less often than once in 2 years).

(7) The soils have a product of  $K$  (erodibility factor)  $\times$  percent slope of less than 2.0 and a product of  $I$  (soil erodibility)  $\times$   $C$  (climatic factor) not exceeding 60.

(8) The soils have a permeability rate of at least 0.06 inch per hour in the upper 20 inches and the mean annual soil temperature at a depth of 20 inches is less than 59 degrees F.; the permeability rate is not a limiting factor if the mean annual soil temperature is 59 degrees F. or higher.

(9) Less than 10 percent of the surface layer (upper 6 inches) in these soils consists of rock fragments coarser than 3 inches.

(c) *Indentification of prime farmland.* Prime farmland shall be identified on the basis of soil surveys submitted by the applicant. The regulatory authority also may require data on irrigation, drainage, flood control, and subsurface water management. The requirement for submission of soil surveys may be waived by the regulatory authority, if the applicant can demonstrate according to the procedures in paragraph (d) of this section that no prime farmlands are involved. Soil surveys shall be conducted according to standards of the National Cooperative Soil Survey, which include the procedures set forth in U.S. Department of Agriculture Handbooks 436 (Soil Taxonomy) and 18 (Soil Survey Manual), and shall include—

(1) Data on moisture availability, temperature regime, flooding, water table, erosion characteristics, permeability, or other information that is needed to determine prime farmland in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section;

(2) A map designating the exact location and extent of the prime farmland; and

(3) A description of each soil mapping unit.

(d) *Negative determination of prime farmland.* The land shall not be considered as prime farmland where the applicant can demonstrate one or more of the following situations—

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(1) Lands within the proposed permit boundaries have not been historically used for cropland.

(2) The slope of all land within the permit area is 10 percent or greater.

(3) Land within the permit area is not irrigated or naturally subirrigated, has no developed water supply that is dependable and of adequate quality, and the average annual precipitation is 14 inches or less.

(4) Other factors exist, such as a very rocky surface, or the land is frequently flooded, which clearly place all land within the area outside the purview of prime farmland.

(5) A written notification based on scientific findings and soil surveys that land within the proposed mining area does not meet the applicability requirements in paragraph (a) of this section is submitted to the regulatory authority by a qualified person other than the applicant, and is approved by the regulatory authority.

(e) *Plan for restoration of prime farmland.* The applicant shall submit to the regulatory authority a plan for the mining and restoration of any prime farmland within the proposed permit boundaries. This plan shall be used by the regulatory authority in judging the technological capability of the applicant to restore prime farmlands. The plan shall include—

(1) A description of the original undisturbed soil profile, as determined from a soil survey, showing the depth and thickness of each of the soil horizons that collectively constitute the root zone of the locally adapted crops and are to be removed, stored, and replaced;

(2) The proposed method and type of equipment to be used for removal, storage, and replacement of the soil in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section;

(3) The location of areas to be used for the separate stockpiling of the soil and plans for soil stabilization before redistribution;

(4) If applicable, documentation such as agricultural school studies or other scientific data from comparable areas that supports the use of other suitable material, instead of the A, B or C soil horizon to obtain on the restored area equivalent or higher levels of yield as

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non-mined prime farmlands in the surrounding area under equivalent levels of management; and

(5) Plans for seeding or cropping the final graded mine land and the conservation practices to control erosion and sedimentation during the first 12 months after regrading is completed. Proper adjustments for seasons must be made so that final graded land is not exposed to erosion during seasons when vegetation or conservation practices cannot be established due to weather conditions; and

(6) Available agricultural school studies, company data, or other scientific data for comparable areas that demonstrate that the applicant using his proposed method of reclamation will achieve, within a reasonable time equivalent or higher levels of yield after mining as existed before mining.

(f) *Consultation with Secretary of Agriculture and issuance of permit.* (1) The regulatory authority may grant a permit which shall incorporate the plan submitted under paragraph (e) of this section, if it finds in writing that the applicant—

(i) Has the technological capability to restore the prime farmland within the proposed permit area, within a reasonable time, to equivalent or higher levels of yield as nonmined prime farmland in the surrounding area under equivalent levels of management; and

(ii) Will achieve compliance with the standards of paragraph (g) of this section.

(2) Before any permit is issued for areas that include prime farmlands, the regulatory authority shall consult with the Secretary of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture will provide a review of the proposed method of soil reconstruction and comment on possible revisions that will result in a more complete and adequate restoration. The Secretary of Agriculture has assigned his responsibilities under this paragraph to the Administrator of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service will carry out the consultation and review through their State Conservationist, located in each State.

(g) *Special requirements.* For all prime farmlands to be mined and reclaimed,



the applicant shall meet the following special requirements:

(1) All soil horizons to be used in the reconstruction of the soil shall be removed before drilling, blasting, or mining to prevent contaminating the soil horizons with undesirable materials. Where removal of soil horizons result in erosion that may cause air and water pollution, the regulatory authority shall specify methods of treatment to control erosion of exposed overburden. The permittee shall—

(i) Remove separately the entire A horizon or other suitable soil materials which will create a final soil having an equal or greater productive capacity than that which existed prior to mining in a manner that prevents mixing or contamination with other material before replacement;

(ii) Remove separately the B horizon of the natural soil or a combination of B horizon and underlying C horizon or other suitable soil material that will create a reconstructed root zone of equal or greater productivity capacity than that which existed prior to mining in a manner that prevents mixing or contamination with other material; and

(iii) Remove separately the underlying C horizons or other strata, or a combination of such horizons or other strata, to be used instead of the B horizon that are of equal or greater thickness and that can be shown to be equal or more favorable for plant growth than the B horizon, and that when replaced will create in the reconstructed soil a final root zone of comparable depth and quality to that which existed in the natural soil.

(2) If stockpiling of soil horizons is allowed by the regulatory authority in lieu of immediate replacement, the A horizon and B horizon must be stored separately from each other. The stockpiles must be placed within the permit area and where they will not be disturbed or exposed to excessive erosion by water or wind before the stockpiled horizons can be redistributed on terrain graded to final contour. Stockpiles in place for more than 30 days must meet the requirements of §715.16(c).

(3) Scarify the final graded land before the soil horizons are replaced.

(4) Replace the material from the B horizon, or other suitable material specified in paragraph (g)(1)(ii) or (g)(1)(iii) of this section in such a manner as to avoid excessive compaction of overburden and to a thickness comparable to the root zone that existed in the soil before mining.

(5) Replace the A horizon or other suitable soil materials, which will create a final soil having an equal or greater productive capacity than existed prior to mining, as the final surface soil layer to the thickness of the original soil as determined in paragraph (g)(1)(i) of this section in a manner that—

(i) Prevents excess compaction of both the surface layer and underlying material and reduction of permeability to less than 0.06 inch per hour in the upper 20 inches of the reconstructed soil profile; and

(ii) Protects the surface layer from wind and water erosion before it is seeded or planted.

(6) Apply nutrients and soil amendments as needed to establish quick vegetative growth.

[42 FR 62691, Dec. 13, 1977; 43 FR 2722, Jan. 19, 1978, as amended at 46 FR 47529, Sept. 28, 1981; 46 FR 47721, Sept. 29, 1981]

#### § 716.10 Information collection.

The Office of Management and Budget has determined that the information collection requirements contained in 30 CFR part 716 do not require approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

[59 FR 43420, Aug. 23, 1994]

### PART 717—UNDERGROUND MINING GENERAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Sec.

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717.11 General obligations.

717.12 Signs and markers.

717.13 [Reserved]

717.14 Backfilling and grading of road cuts, mine entry area cuts, and other surface work areas.

717.15 Disposal of excess rock and earth materials on surface areas.

717.16 [Reserved]

717.17 Protection of the hydrologic system.

717.18 Dams constructed of or impounding waste material.

717.19 [Reserved]