

all coal that will be left, such as in pillars, fenders, or property barriers. Other areas where mining is not permissible (including, but not limited to, areas classified as unsuitable for coal mining operations) shall be excluded from the minable reserve base.

(24) *Mine* means an underground or surface excavation or series of excavations and the surface or underground support facilities that contribute directly or indirectly to mining, production, preparation, and handling of coal.

(25) *MLA* means the Act of February 25, 1920, as amended, commonly referred to as the Mineral Leasing Act and codified at 30 U.S.C. 181, *et seq.*, and the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands, as amended, 30 U.S.C. 351-359.

(26) *Notice of availability* means formal notification by the authorized officer to: appropriate Federal, State, and local government agencies; to the surface and mineral owners; and to the public in accordance with 43 CFR 3481.2.

(27) *Operator/lessee* means lessee, licensee, and/or one conducting operations on a Federal lease or license under a written contract or written agreement with the lessee or licensee.

(28) *Permanent abandonment of exploration operations* means the completion of all activities conducted under an approved exploration plan, including plugging of all drill holes, submission of required records, and reclamation of all disturbed surfaces.

(29) *Permanent abandonment of mining operations* means the completion of all development, production, and resource recovery and protection requirements conducted under an approved resource recovery and protection plan, including satisfaction of all Federal rental and royalty requirements.

(30) *Preparation* means any physical or chemical treatment to prepare coal for market. Treatment may include crushing, sizing, drying, mixing, or other processing, and removal of noncoal waste such as bone or other impurities to enhance the quality and therefore the value of the coal.

(31) *Production* means mining of recoverable coal reserves and/or commercial byproducts from a mine using surface, underground, auger, or *in situ* methods.

(32) *Recoverable coal reserves* means the minable reserve base excluding all coal that will be left, such as in pillars, fenders, and property barriers.

(33) *Resource recovery and protection* includes practices to: recover efficiently the recoverable coal reserves subject to these rules; avoid wasting or loss of coal or other resources; prevent damage to or degradation of coal-bearing or mineral-bearing formations; ensure MER of the Federal coal; and ensure that other resources are protected during exploration, development, and mining, and upon abandonment.

(34) *Resource recovery and protection plan* means a plan showing that the proposed operation meets the requirements of MLA for development, production, resource recovery and protection, diligent development, continued operation, MER, and the rules of this part for the life-of-the-mine.

(35) *State Director* means an employee of the Bureau of Land Management who has been designated as the chief administrative officer of one of the Bureau's 12 administrative areas designated as "States".

(36) *Subsidence* means a lowering of surface elevations over an underground mine caused by loss of support and subsequent settling or caving of strata lying above the mine.

(b) The following shall have the meanings as defined at 30 CFR Chapter VII:

- Alluvial valley floors*
- Federal Lands Program*
- Ground water*
- Indian lands*
- Overburden*
- Permit*
- Permit application*
- Permit application package*
- Permit area*
- Regulatory authority*
- Roads*
- Spoil*

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**§ 3480.0-6 Responsibilities.**

(a) *Responsibilities of other Federal Agencies*—(1) *Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement*. The responsibility for administration of the

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Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) (30 U.S.C. 1201, *et seq.*) is vested in OSM.

(2) *Mine Safety and Health Administration.* The responsibility for enforcement of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, as amended (83 Stat. 742), and the coal mine health and safety rules contained in Chapter I of this title are vested in the Mine Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor.

(3) *Bureau of Land Management.* The responsibility for the issuance of exploration licenses for unleased Federal coal, the issuance of licenses to mine, and the issuance, readjustment, modification, termination, cancellation, and/or approval of transfers of Federal coal leases pursuant to MLA, as amended, is vested in the Bureau of Land Management.

(b) The BLM has the general responsibility to administer MLA with respect to coal mining, production, and resource recovery and protection operations on Federal coal leases and licenses, and to supervise exploration operations for Federal coal.

(c) Subject to the supervisory authority of the Secretary, the rules of this part shall be administered by BLM through the Director; Deputy Director for Energy and Mineral Resources; Chief, Division of Solid Mineral Operations; State Director and authorized officer.

(d) The authorized officer is empowered to oversee exploration, development, production, resource recovery and protection, diligent development, continued operation, preparation, handling, product verification, and abandonment operations subject to the rules of this part, and shall be responsible for the following:

(1) *Exploration plans.* Approve, disapprove, approve upon condition(s), or require modification to exploration plans for Federal coal.

(2) *Resource recovery and protection plans.* Recommend to the Assistant Secretary for Energy and Minerals the approval, disapproval, or approval upon condition(s) of resource recovery and protection plans.

(3) *LMU applications.* Approve, disapprove, or approve upon condition(s) LMU applications or modifications

thereto; direct the establishment of LMU's in the interest of conservation of recoverable coal reserves and other resources; conduct public hearings on LMU applications, as appropriate, recommend amendments to Federal lease terms when determined necessary to ensure consistency with LMU stipulations; monitor and ensure compliance with LMU stipulations and the rules of this part; and require reports and information for the establishment of an LMU.

(4) *Inspection of operations.* Examine as frequently as necessary, but at least quarterly, federally leased or licensed lands where operations for exploration, development, production, preparation, and handling of coal are conducted or are to be conducted; inspect such operations for product verification, resource recovery and protection, MER, diligent development and continued operation; inspect such operations for the purpose of determining whether wasting or degradation of other resources or damage to formations and deposits or nonmineral resources affected by the operations is being avoided or minimized; and determine whether there is compliance with all provisions of applicable laws, rules, and orders, all terms and conditions of Federal leases and licenses, and all requirements of approved exploration or resource recovery and protection plans.

(5) *Compliance.* Require operators/lessees to conduct operations subject to the rules of this part in compliance with all provisions of applicable laws, rules, and orders, all terms and conditions of Federal leases and licenses under MLA requirements, and approved exploration or resource recovery and protection plans for requirements of production, development, resource recovery and protection, MER, diligent development and continued operation upon commencement of production.

(6) *Waiver, suspension, or reduction of rentals, or reduction of royalties.* Receive and act on applications for waiver, suspension, or reduction of rentals, and receive and act on applications for reduction of royalties, but not advance royalty, filed pursuant to the rules of this part.

(7) *Extensions or suspensions.* Receive and act on applications for extensions

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or suspensions filed in accordance with 43 CFR 3483.2 and, when appropriate, terminate extensions or suspensions that have been granted, provided that approval of an extension or a suspension shall not preclude the regulatory authority from requiring the operator/lessee to continue to comply with the reclamation requirements of 30 CFR Chapter VII, Subchapter K, or an approved State program.

(8) *Cessation and abandonment.* Upon receipt of notice of proposed abandonment or upon relinquishment of a Federal lease, in accordance with 43 CFR 3452.1-2, or Federal license, in accordance with 43 CFR 3410.3-1(d), the authorized officer shall conduct an inspection to determine whether the applicable exploration, development, production, resource recovery and protection, and abandonment requirements of the Federal lease or license have been met. Relinquishment or abandonment of a Federal lease shall not preclude the regulatory authority from requiring the operator/lessee to comply with the reclamation requirements of 30 CFR Chapter VII, Subchapter K, or an approved State program.

(9) *Exploration drill holes.* Prescribe or approve the methods for protecting coal-bearing formations from damage or contamination that might occur as a result of any holes drilled to, or through, the coal-bearing formations for any purpose under an approved exploration plan.

(10) *Trespass.* Report to the responsible officer of the surface managing agency, with a copy to the regulatory authority, any trespass on Federal lands that involves exploration activities or removal of unleased Federal coal, determine the quantity and quality of coal removed, and recommend the amount of trespass damages.

(11) *Water and air quality.* Inspect exploration operations to determine compliance with air and surface and ground water pollution control measures required by Federal statutes as implemented by the terms and conditions of applicable Federal leases, licenses or approved exploration plans, and promptly notify appropriate representatives of the regulatory authority and Federal Agencies in the event of any noncompliance.

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(12) *Implementation of rules.* Issue General Mining Orders and other orders for enforcement, make determinations, and grant consents and approvals as necessary to implement or ensure compliance with the rules of this part. Any oral orders, approvals, or consents shall be promptly confirmed in writing.

(13) *Lease bonds.* (i) Determine whether the total amount of Federal lease bond with respect to operations under the rules of this part is adequate at all times to satisfy the reclamation requirements of the exploration plan.

(ii) Determine whether the total amount of any bond furnished with respect to operations subject to the rules of this part is at all times adequate to satisfy the requirements of the Federal lease or license relating to exploration, development, production, resource recovery and protection, and shall determine if the bond amount is adequate to satisfy any payments of rentals on producing Federal leases and payments of Federal royalties.

(iii) Notify the responsible officer of the surface managing agency of determinations under (c)(13) (i) and (ii) of this section.

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### Subpart 3481—General Provisions

#### § 3481.1 General obligations of the operator/lessee.

(a) The operator/lessee shall conduct exploration activities, reclamation, and abandonment of exploration operations for Federal coal pursuant to the performance standards of the rules of this part, applicable requirements of 30 CFR 815.15 (OSM permanent performance standards for coal exploration) or an approved State program, any Federal lease or license terms and/or conditions, the requirements of the approved exploration plan, and orders issued by the authorized officer.

(b) The operator/lessee shall conduct surface and underground coal mining operations involving development, production, resource recovery and protection, and preparation and handling of coal in accordance with the rules of this part, terms and conditions of the Federal leases or licenses, the approved resource recovery and protection plan,