Bureau of Land Management, Interior

PART 3930—MANAGEMENT OF OIL SHALE EXPLORATION AND LEASES

Subpart 3930—Management of Oil Shale Exploration Licenses and Leases

Sec.
3930.10 General performance standards.
3930.11 Performance standards for exploration and in situ operations.
3930.12 Performance standards for underground mining.
3930.13 Performance standards for surface mines.
3930.20 Operations.
3930.30 Diligent development milestones.
3930.40 Assessments for missing diligence milestones.

Subpart 3931—Plans of Development and Exploration Plans

3931.10 Exploration plans and plans of development for mining and in situ operations.
3931.11 Content of plan of development.
3931.20 Reclamation.
3931.30 Suspension of operations and production.
3931.40 Exploration.
3931.41 Content of exploration plan.
3931.50 Exploration plan and plan of development modifications.
3931.60 Maps of underground and surface mine workings and in situ surface operations.
3931.70 Production maps and production reports.
3931.80 Core or test hole samples and cuttings.
3931.100 Boundary pillars and buffer zones.

Subpart 3932—Lease Modifications and Readjustments

3932.10 Lease size modification.
3932.20 Lease modification land availability criteria.
3932.30 Terms and conditions of a modified lease.
3932.40 Readjustment of lease terms.

Subpart 3933—Assignments and Subleases

3933.10 Leases or licenses subject to assignment or sublease.
3933.20 Filing fees.
3933.31 Record title assignments.
3933.32 Overriding royalty interests.
3933.40 Account status.
3933.51 Bond coverage.
3933.52 Continuing responsibility under assignment and sublease.
3933.60 Effective date.
3933.70 Extensions.

Subpart 3934—Relinquishment, Cancellations, and Terminations

3934.10 Relinquishments.
3934.21 Written notice of default.
3934.22 Causes and procedures for lease cancellation.
3934.30 License terminations.
3934.40 Payments due.
3934.50 Bona fide purchasers.

Subpart 3935—Production and Sale Records

3935.10 Accounting records.

Subpart 3936—Inspection and Enforcement

3936.10 Inspection of underground and surface operations and facilities.
3936.20 Issuance of notices of noncompliance and orders.
3936.30 Enforcement of notices of noncompliance and orders.
3936.40 Appeals.


SOURCE: 73 FR 69480, Nov. 18, 2008, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart 3930—Management of Oil Shale Exploration Licenses and Leases

§ 3930.10 General performance standards.

The operator/lessee must comply with the following performance standards concerning exploration, development, and production:

(a) All operations must be conducted to achieve MER;

(b) Operations must be conducted under an approved POD or exploration plan;

(c) The operator/lessee must diligently develop the lease and must comply with the diligent development milestones and production requirements at §3930.30;

(d) The operator/lessee must notify the BLM promptly if operations encounter unexpected wells or drill holes that could adversely affect the recovery of shale oil or other minerals producible under an oil shale lease during mining operations, and must not take any action that would disturb such wells or drill holes without the BLM’s prior approval.
§ 3930.11 Performance standards for exploration and in situ operations.

The operator/lessee must adhere to the following standards for all exploration and in situ drilling operations:

(a) At the end of exploration operations, all drill holes must be capped with at least 5 feet of cement and plugged with a permanent plugging material that is unaffected by water and hydrocarbon gases and will prevent the migration of gases and water in the drill hole under normal hole pressures. For holes drilled deeper than stripping limits, the operator/lessee, using cement or other suitable plugging material the BLM approves in advance, must plug the hole through the thickness of the oil shale bed(s) or mineral deposit(s) and through aquifers for a distance of at least 50 feet above and below the oil shale bed(s) or mineral deposit(s) and aquifers, or to the bottom of the drill hole. The BLM may approve a lesser cap or plug. Capping and plugging must be managed to prevent water pollution and the mixing of ground and surface waters and to ensure the safety of people, livestock, and wildlife.

(b) The operator/lessee must retain for 1 year all drill and geophysical logs. The operator must also make such logs available for inspection or analysis by the BLM. The BLM may require the operator/lessee to retain representative samples of drill cores for 1 year.

(c) The operator/lessee may, after the BLM's written approval, use drill holes as surveillance wells for the purpose of monitoring the effects of subsequent operations on the quantity, quality, or pressure of ground water or mine gases; and

(d) The operator/lessee may, after written approval from the BLM and the surface owner, convert drill holes to water wells. When granting such approvals, the BLM will include a transfer to the surface owner of responsibility for any liability, including eventual plugging, reclamation, and abandonment.

§ 3930.12 Performance standards for underground mining.

(a) Underground mining operations must be conducted in a manner to prevent the waste of oil shale, to conserve recoverable oil shale reserves, and to protect other resources. The BLM must approve in writing permanent abandonment and operations that render oil shale inaccessible.

(b) The operator/lessee must adopt mining methods that ensure the proper recovery of recoverable oil shale reserves.

(c) Operators/lessees must adopt measures consistent with known technology to prevent or, where the mining method used requires subsidence, control subsidence, maximize mine stability, and maintain the value and use of surface lands. If the POD indicates that pillars will not be removed and controlled subsidence is not part of the POD, the POD must show that pillars of adequate dimensions will be left for surface stability, considering the thickness and strength of the oil shale beds and the strata above and immediately below the mined interval.

(d) The lessee/operator must have the BLM’s approval to temporarily abandon a mine or portions thereof.

(e) The operator/lessee must have the BLM’s prior approval to mine any recoverable oil shale reserves or drive any underground workings within 50 feet of any of the outer boundary lines of the federally-leased or federally-licensed land. The BLM may approve operations closer to the boundary after taking into consideration state and Federal environmental laws and regulations.

(f) The lessee/operator must have the BLM’s prior approval before drilling any lateral holes within 50 feet of any outside boundary.

(g) Either the operator/lessee or the BLM may initiate the proposal to mine