

**Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Interior****§ 774.10**

(d) We will post all decisions made under this section on AVS.

(e) Any person who receives a written decision under this section, and who wishes to appeal that decision, must exhaust administrative remedies under the procedures at 43 CFR 4.1380 through 4.1387 or, when a State is the regulatory authority, the State regulatory program counterparts, before seeking judicial review.

(f) Following our written decision or any decision by a reviewing administrative or judicial tribunal, we must review the information in AVS to determine if it is consistent with the decision. If it is not, we must promptly revise the information in AVS to reflect the decision.

[65 FR 79666, Dec. 19, 2000, as amended at 72 FR 68030, Dec. 3, 2007]

**PART 774—REVISION; RENEWAL; TRANSFER, ASSIGNMENT, OR SALE OF PERMIT RIGHTS; POST-PERMIT ISSUANCE REQUIREMENTS; AND OTHER ACTIONS BASED ON OWNERSHIP, CONTROL, AND VIOLATION INFORMATION**

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AUTHORITY: 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*

SOURCE: 48 FR 44395, Sept. 28, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

EDITORIAL NOTE: At 82 FR 54944, Nov. 17, 2017, as required by the Congressional Review Act and Public Law 115-5, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement removed all amendments to part 774 made effective on Jan. 19, 2017, at 81 FR 93325-93326, Dec. 20, 2016.

**§ 774.1 Scope and purpose.**

This part provides requirements for revision; renewal; transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights; entering and updating information in AVS following the issuance of a permit; post-permit issuance requirements for regulatory authorities and permittees; and other actions based on ownership, control, and violation information.

[65 FR 79667, Dec. 19, 2000]

**§ 774.9 Information collection.**

(a) The collections of information contained in part 774 have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.* and assigned clearance number 1029-0116. Regulatory authorities will use this information to:

(1) Determine if the applicant meets the requirements for revision; renewal; transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights;

(2) Enter and update information in AVS following the issuance of a permit; and

(3) Fulfill post-permit issuance requirements and other obligations based on ownership, control, and violation information.

(b) A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Response is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with SMCRA. Send comments regarding burden estimates or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Information Collection Clearance Officer, Room 202-SIB, 1951 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20240.

[72 FR 68030, Dec. 3, 2007, as amended at 81 FR 93325, Dec. 20, 2016; 82 FR 54944, Nov. 17, 2017]

**§ 774.10 Regulatory authority review of permits.**

(a) The regulatory authority shall review each permit issued and outstanding under an approved regulatory program during the term of the permit. This review shall occur not later than

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the middle of each permit term and as follows:

(1) Permits with a term longer than 5 years shall be reviewed no less frequently than the permit midterm or every 5 years, whichever is more frequent.

(2) Permits with variances granted in accordance with § 785.14 of this chapter (mountaintop removal) and § 785.18 of this chapter (variance for delay in contemporaneous reclamation requirement in combined surface and underground mining operations) of this chapter shall be reviewed no later than 3 years from the date of issuance of the permit unless, for variances issued in accordance with § 785.14 of this chapter, the permittee affirmatively demonstrates that the proposed development is proceeding in accordance with the terms of the permit.

(3) Permits containing experimental practices issued in accordance with § 785.13 of this chapter and permits with a variance from approximate original contour requirements in accordance with § 785.16 shall be reviewed as set forth in the permit or at least every 2½ years from the date of issuance as required by the regulatory authority, in accordance with §§ 785.13(g) and 785.16(c) of this chapter, respectively.

(b) After the review required by paragraph (a) of this section, or at any time, the regulatory authority may, by order, require reasonable revision of a permit in accordance with § 774.13 to ensure compliance with the Act and the regulatory program.

(c) Any order of the regulatory authority requiring revision of a permit shall be based upon written findings and shall be subject to the provisions for administrative and judicial review in part 775 of this chapter. Copies of the order shall be sent to the permittee.

(d) Permits may be suspended or revoked in accordance with subchapter L of this chapter.

[48 FR 44398, Sept. 28, 1983. Redesignated at 65 FR 79667, Dec. 19, 2000, as amended at 81 FR 93325, Dec. 20, 2016; 82 FR 54944, Nov. 17, 2017]

**§ 774.11 Post-permit issuance requirements for regulatory authorities and other actions based on ownership, control, and violation information.**

(a) For the purposes of future permit eligibility determinations and enforcement actions, we, the regulatory authority, must enter into AVS the data shown in the following table—

We must enter into AVS all . . .	Within 30 days after . . .
(1) permit records .....	the permit is issued or subsequent changes made.
(2) unabated or uncorrected violations .....	the abatement or correction period for a violation expires.
(3) changes to information initially required to be provided by an applicant under 30 CFR 778.11.	receiving notice of a change.
(4) changes in violation status .....	abatement, correction, or termination of a violation, or a decision from an administrative or judicial tribunal.

(b) If, at any time, we discover that any person owns or controls an operation with an unabated or uncorrected violation, we will determine whether enforcement action is appropriate under part 843, 846 or 847 of this chapter. We must enter the results of each enforcement action, including administrative and judicial decisions, into AVS.

(c) We must serve a preliminary finding of permanent permit ineligibility under section 510(c) of the Act on you, an applicant or operator, if the criteria in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) are met. In making a finding under this para-

graph, we will only consider control relationships and violations which would make, or would have made, you ineligible for a permit under §§ 773.12(a) and (b) of this subchapter. We must make a preliminary finding of permanent permit ineligibility if we find that—

(1) You control or have controlled surface coal mining and reclamation operations with a demonstrated pattern of willful violations under section 510(c) of the Act; and

(2) The violations are of such nature and duration with such resulting irreparable damage to the environment as to indicate your intent not to comply

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with the Act, its implementing regulations, the regulatory program, or your permit.

(d) You may request a hearing on a preliminary finding of permanent permit ineligibility under 43 CFR 4.1350 through 4.1356.

(e) Entry into AVS.

(1) If you do not request a hearing, and the time for seeking a hearing has expired, we will enter our finding into AVS.

(2) If you request a hearing, we will enter our finding into AVS only if that finding is upheld on administrative appeal.

(f) At any time, we may identify any person who owns or controls an entire surface coal mining operation or any relevant portion or aspect thereof. If we identify such a person, we must issue a written preliminary finding to the person and the applicant or permittee describing the nature and extent of ownership or control. Our written preliminary finding must be based on evidence sufficient to establish a *prima facie* case of ownership or control.

(g) After we issue a written preliminary finding under paragraph (f) of this section, we will allow you, the person subject to the preliminary finding, 30 days in which to submit any information tending to demonstrate your lack of ownership or control. If, after reviewing any information you submit, we are persuaded that you are not an owner or controller, we will serve you a written notice to that effect. If, after reviewing any information you submit, we still find that you are an owner or controller, or if you do not submit any information within the 30-day period, we will issue a written finding and enter our finding into AVS.

(h) If we identify you as an owner or controller under paragraph (g) of this section, you may challenge the finding using the provisions of §§ 773.25, 773.26, and 773.27 of this subchapter.

[65 FR 79667, Dec. 19, 2000, as amended at 72 FR 68030, Dec. 3, 2007]

**§ 774.12 Post-permit issuance information requirements for permittees.**

(a) Within 30 days after the issuance of a cessation order under § 843.11 of this chapter, or its State regulatory

program equivalent, you, the permittee, must provide or update all the information required under § 778.11 of this subchapter.

(b) You do not have to submit information under paragraph (a) of this section if a court of competent jurisdiction grants a stay of the cessation order and the stay remains in effect.

(c) Within 60 days of any addition, departure, or change in position of any person identified in § 778.11(c) of this subchapter, you must provide—

(1) The information required under § 778.11(d) of this subchapter; and

(2) The date of any departure.

[65 FR 79667, Dec. 19, 2000, as amended at 72 FR 68030, Dec. 3, 2007]

**§ 774.13 Permit revisions.**

(a) *General.* During the term of a permit, the permittee may submit an application to the regulatory authority for a revision of the permit.

(b) *Application requirements and procedures.* the regulatory authority shall establish—

(1) A time period within which the regulatory authority will approve or disapprove an application for a permit revision; and

(2) Guidelines establishing the scale or extent of revisions for which all the permit application information requirements and procedures of this subchapter, including notice, public participation, and notice of decision requirements of §§ 773.6, 773.19(b) (1) and (3), and 778.21, shall apply. Such requirements and procedures shall apply at a minimum to all significant permit revisions.

(c) *Criteria for approval.* No application for a permit revision shall be approved unless the application demonstrates and the regulatory authority finds that reclamation as required by the Act and the regulatory program can be accomplished, applicable requirements under § 773.15 which are pertinent to the revision are met, and the application for a revision complies with all requirements of the Act and the regulatory program.

(d) *Request to change permit boundary.* Any extensions to the area covered by the permit, except incidental boundary

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revisions, shall be made by application for a new permit.

[48 FR 44395, Sept. 28, 1983, as amended at 65 FR 79668, Dec. 19, 2000]

### § 774.15 Permit renewals.

(a) *General.* A valid permit, issued pursuant to an approved regulatory program, shall carry with it the right of successive renewal, within the approved boundaries of the existing permit, upon expiration of the term of the permit.

(b) *Application requirements and procedures.* (1) An application for renewal of a permit shall be filed with the regulatory authority at least 120 days before expiration of the existing permit term.

(2) An application for renewal of a permit shall be in the form required by the regulatory authority and shall include at a minimum—

(i) The name and address of the permittee, the term of the renewal requested, and the permit number or other identifier;

(ii) Evidence that a liability insurance policy or adequate self-insurance under § 800.60 of this chapter will be provided by the applicant for the proposed period of renewal;

(iii) Evidence that the performance bond in effect for the operation will continue in full force and effect for any renewal requested, as well as any additional bond required by the regulatory authorities pursuant to subchapter J of this chapter;

(iv) A copy of the proposed newspaper notice and proof of publication of same, as required by § 778.21 of this chapter; and

(v) Additional revised or updated information required by the regulatory authority.

(3) Applications for renewal shall be subject to the requirements of public notification and public participation contained in §§ 773.6 and 773.19(b) of this chapter.

(4) If an application for renewal includes any proposed revisions to the permit, such revisions shall be identified and subject to the requirements of § 774.13.

(c) *Approval process—(1) Criteria for approval.* The regulatory authority shall approve a complete and accurate

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application for permit renewal, unless it finds, in writing that—

(i) The terms and conditions of the existing permit are not being satisfactorily met;

(ii) The present surface coal mining and reclamation operations are not in compliance with the environmental protection standards of the Act and the regulatory program;

(iii) The requested renewal substantially jeopardizes the operator's continuing ability to comply with the Act and the regulatory program on existing permit areas;

(iv) The operator has not provided evidence of having liability insurance or self-insurance as required in § 800.60 of this chapter;

(v) The operator has not provided evidence that any performance bond required to be in effect for the operation will continue in full force and effect for the proposed period of renewal, as well as any additional bond the regulatory authority might require pursuant to subchapter J of this chapter; or

(vi) Additional revised or updated information required by the regulatory authority has not been provided by the applicant.

(2) *Burden of proof.* In the determination of whether to approve or deny a renewal of a permit, the burden of proof shall be on the opponents of renewal.

(3) *Alluvial valley floor variance.* If the surface coal mining and reclamation operation authorized by the original permit was not subject to the standards contained in sections 510(b)(5) (A) and (B) of the Act and § 785.19 of this chapter, because the permittee complied with the exceptions in the proviso to section 510(b)(5) of the Act, the portion of the application for renewal of the permit that addresses new land areas previously identified in the reclamation plan for the original permit shall not be subject to the standards contained in sections 510(b)(5) (A) and (B) of the Act and § 785.19 of this chapter.

(d) *Renewal term.* Any permit renewal shall be for a term not to exceed the period of the original permit established under § 773.19.

(e) *Notice of decision.* The regulatory authority shall send copies of its decision to the applicant, to each person who filed comments or objections on the renewal, to each party to any informal conference held on the permit renewal, and to OSM if OSM is not the regulatory authority.

(f) *Administrative and judicial review.* Any person having an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the decision of the regulatory authority shall have the right to administrative and judicial review set forth in part 775 of this chapter.

[48 FR 44395, Sept. 28, 1983, as amended at 79668, Dec. 19, 2000; 81 FR 93326, Dec. 20, 2016; 82 FR 54944, Nov. 17, 2017]

#### § 774.17 Transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights.

(a) *General.* No transfer, assignment, or sale of rights granted by a permit shall be made without the prior written approval of the regulatory authority. At its discretion, the regulatory authority may allow a prospective successor in interest to engage in surface coal mining and reclamation operations under the permit during the pendency of an application for approval of a transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights submitted under paragraph (b) of this section, provided that the prospective successor in interest can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the regulatory authority that sufficient bond coverage will remain in place.

(b) *Application requirements.* An applicant for approval of the transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights shall—

(1) Provide the regulatory authority with an application for approval of the proposed transfer, assignment, or sale including—

(i) The name and address of the existing permittee and permit number or other identifier;

(ii) A brief description of the proposed action requiring approval; and

(iii) The legal, financial, compliance, and related information required by part 778 of this chapter for the applicant for approval of the transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights.

(2) Advertise the filing of the application in a newspaper of general circula-

tion in the locality of the operations involved, indicating the name and address of the applicant, the permittee, the permit number or other identifier, the geographic location of the permit, and the address to which written comments may be sent;

(3) Obtain appropriate performance bond coverage in an amount sufficient to cover the proposed operations, as required under subchapter J of this chapter.

(c) *Public participation.* Any person having an interest which is or may be adversely affected by a decision on the transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights, including an official of any Federal, State, or local government agency, may submit written comments on the application to the regulatory authority within a time specified by the regulatory authority.

(d) *Criteria for approval.* The regulatory authority may allow a permittee to transfer, assign, or sell permit rights to a successor, if it finds in writing that the successor—

(1) Is eligible to receive a permit in accordance with §§ 773.12 and 773.14 of this chapter;

(2) Has submitted a performance bond or other guarantee, or obtained the bond coverage of the original permittee, as required by subchapter J of this chapter; and

(3) Meets any other requirements specified by the regulatory authority.

(e) *Notification.* (1) The regulatory authority shall notify the permittee, the successor, commenters, and OSM, if OSM is not the regulatory authority, of its findings.

(2) The successor shall immediately provide notice to the regulatory authority of the consummation of the transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights.

(f) *Continued operation under existing permit.* The successor in interest shall assume the liability and reclamation responsibilities of the existing permit and shall conduct the surface coal mining and reclamation operations in full compliance with the Act, the regulatory program, and the terms and conditions of the existing permit, unless

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the applicant has obtained a new or revised permit as provided in this subchapter.

[48 FR 44395, Sept. 28, 1983, as amended at 65 FR 79668, Dec. 19, 2000; 72 FR 68030, Dec. 3, 2007]

### PART 775—ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL REVIEW OF DECISIONS

Sec.

775.1 Scope and purpose.  
775.11 Administrative review.  
775.13 Judicial review.

AUTHORITY: 30 U.S.C. 1201 *et seq.*

SOURCE: 48 FR 44397, Sept. 28, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 775.1 Scope and purpose.

This part provides requirements for administrative and judicial review of decisions on permits.

#### § 775.11 Administrative review.

(a) *General.* Within 30 days after an applicant or permittee is notified of the decision of the regulatory authority concerning an application for approval of exploration required under part 772 of this chapter, a permit for surface coal mining and reclamation operations, a permit revision, a permit renewal, or a transfer, assignment, or sale of permit rights, the applicant, permittee, or any person with an interest which is or may be adversely affected may request a hearing on the reasons for the decision, in accordance with this section.

(b) *Administrative hearings under State programs.* (1) The regulatory authority shall start the administrative hearing within 30 days of such request. The hearing shall be on the record and adjudicatory in nature. No person who presided at an informal conference under § 773.6(c) shall either preside at the hearing or participate in the decision following the hearing or administrative appeal.

(2) The regulatory authority may, under such conditions as it prescribes, grant such temporary relief as it deems appropriate, pending final determination of the proceeding, if—

(i) All parties to the proceeding have been notified and given an opportunity

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to be heard on a request for temporary relief;

(ii) The person requesting that relief shows that there is a substantial likelihood that he or she will prevail on the merits of the final determination of the proceeding;

(iii) The relief sought will not adversely affect the public health or safety, or cause significant, imminent environmental harm to land, air, or water resources; and

(iv) The relief sought is not the issuance of a permit where a permit has been denied, in whole or in part, by the regulatory authority except that continuation under an existing permit may be allowed where the operation has a valid permit issued under section 510 of the Act.

(3) The hearing shall be conducted under the following conditions:

(i) The hearing authority may administer oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses and written or printed materials, compel attendance of witnesses or production of those materials, compel discovery, and take evidence, including, but not limited to, site inspections of the land to be affected and other surface coal mining and reclamation operations carried on by the applicant in the general vicinity of the proposed operations.

(ii) A verbatim record of each public hearing required by this section shall be made, and a transcript made available on the motion of any party or by order of the hearing authority.

(iii) Ex parte contacts between representatives of the parties appearing before the hearing authority and the hearing authority shall be prohibited.

(4) Within 30 days after the close of the record, the hearing authority shall issue and furnish the applicant and each person who participated in the hearing with the written findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order of the hearing authority with respect to the appeal of the decision.

(5) The burden of proof at such hearings shall be on the party seeking to reverse the decision of the regulatory authority.

(c) *Administrative hearings under Federal programs and Federal lands programs.* All hearings, under a Federal program for a State or a Federal lands