

R647. Natural Resources; Oil, Gas and Mining; Non-Coal.

R647-1. Minerals Regulatory Program.

R647-1-101. Preamble.

These Rules and all subsequent revisions as approved and promulgated by the Board of Oil, Gas, and Mining (Board) of the State of Utah, are developed pursuant to the requirements of the Utah Mined Land Reclamation Act of 1975, Title 40, Chapter 8 of the Utah Code Annotated as amended (the Act). Section 40-8-2 of the Act states the findings of the Legislature.

In accordance with this legislative direction, these Rules recognize the necessity to balance the reclamation objectives of the Act with the physical, biological and economical constraints which may exist on successful reclamation. The Act and its revisions are hereby expressly incorporated herein by reference and made a part of these Rules.

There is intentional duplication in these rules. For example, the rule on hole plugging requirements is repeated in the section on Exploration, Small Mining Operations, and Large Mining Operations. This repetition is intended to benefit the Operator by putting all the rules relevant to a type of operation in the introductory section and in the section on that type of operation.

R647-1-102. Introduction.

1. Effective Dates, Applicability, Type of Operations Affected:

1.11. Effective November 1, 1988, the following rules apply to all previously exempted mining operations and to mining operations planning to commence, or resume operations within the state of Utah. These rules will not apply to existing mining operations approved prior to the effective date of these rules, or to notices of intention or amendments filed prior to these rules. However, these rules will apply to any revisions to an approved notice of intention filed subsequent to the effective date of these rules.

1.12. Operators should refer to the section of these rules which applies to the type of mining operation (e.g., exploration, small mining operation, or large mining operation) being conducted or proposed.

1.13. These rules apply to all lands within the state of Utah lawfully subject to its police power, regardless of surface or mineral ownership, and regardless of the type of mining operation conducted.

2. Cooperative Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding:

The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (Division) will cooperate with other state agencies, local governmental bodies, agencies of the federal government, and private interests in the furtherance of the purposes of the Utah Mined Land Reclamation Act. The Division is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements and develop memoranda of understanding with agencies in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. The objective is to minimize the need for operators to undertake duplicative, overlapping, excessive, or conflicting procedures.

3. Operator Responsibilities, Compliance with other Local, State and Federal Laws:

The approval or acceptance of a complete notice of intention shall not relieve an operator from his responsibility to comply with the applicable statutes, rules, regulations, and ordinances of all local, state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over any aspect of the operator's mining operations, including, but not limited to: Utah State Division of Water Rights, the Utah Department of Business Regulation, the Utah State Industrial Commission, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, the Utah Division of State History, the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, The School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and local county or municipal governments.

4. Division Guidelines, Operator Assistance in Application Preparation:

Each operator who conducts mining operations on any lands within the state of Utah is responsible for compliance with the following rules. The Division shall provide guidelines to aid the operator in complying with the rules.

R647-1-103. General Rules.

The following are general rules for statewide application.

R647-1-104. Violations and Enforcement.

If after notice and hearing, the Board finds that a violation of the Act, these rules, a notice of intention, or a Board or Division order has occurred, the Board may take any enforcement action authorized by law including requiring: compliance, abatement, mitigation, cessation of operations, a civil suit, forfeiture of surety, reclamation, or any other lawful action.

R647-1-105. Forms.

The attached forms are intended for the convenience of the operator and the Division, and may be changed from time to time. The forms are not part of these rules and use of a particular form, though encouraged, is not required, as long as all of the necessary information is provided in a reasonable manner.

R647-1-106. Definitions.

"Act" means the Utah Mined Land Reclamation Act, enacted in 1975, as amended. (Section 40-8-1, et seq., UCA).

"Adjudicative proceeding" means an agency action or proceeding that determines the legal rights, duties, privileges, immunities, or other legal interests of one or more identifiable persons, including any agency actions to grant, deny, revoke, suspend, modify, annul, withdraw, or amend an authority, right, or license; and judicial review of any of such actions. Those matters not governed by Title 63G, Chapter 4, Administrative Procedures Act, (1953, as amended) shall not be included within this definition.

"Agency" means a board, commission, department, division, officer, council, office, committee, commission, bureau, or other administrative unit of this state, including the agency head, agency employees, or other persons acting on behalf of or under the authority

of the agency head, but does not mean the Legislature, the courts, the governor, any political subdivision of the state, or any administrative unit of a political subdivision of the state.

"Agency head" means an individual or body of individuals in whom the ultimate legal authority of the agency is vested by statute.

"Amendment" is an insignificant change in the approved notice of intention.

"Approved Notice of Intention" means a formally filed notice of intention to commence mining operations, including any amendments or revisions thereto that is determined to be complete and contains a mining and reclamation plan, which has been approved by the Division. A notice of intention for exploration having a disturbed area of five acres or less, or a small mining operation must be determined complete in writing by the Division, but does not require a mining and reclamation plan.

"Basalt" (a) means fine grained, dark-colored igneous rock associated with a lava flow or igneous intrusion composed primarily of plagioclase and pyroxene. (b) Utah Geological Survey or the United States Geological Survey published maps that classify material as "basalt" is prima facie evidence that the material meets the requirements of Subsection (a). An unmapped area can be classified by a Utah Geological Survey Geologist or a licensed professional geologist in the state.

"Board" means the Utah Board of Oil, Gas and Mining. The Board shall hear any appeals of adjudicative proceedings which commenced before the Division as well as any adjudicative proceedings and other proceedings which commence before the Board. The Board may appoint a Hearing Examiner for its hearings in accordance with the Rules of Practice and Procedure before the Board of Oil, Gas and Mining.

"Deleterious Materials" means earth, waste or introduced materials exposed by mining operations to air, water, weather or microbiological processes, which would likely produce chemical or physical conditions in the soils or water that are detrimental to the biota or hydrologic systems.

"Deposit" or "mineral deposit" means an accumulation of mineral matter in the form of consolidated rock, unconsolidated materials, solutions, or otherwise occurring on the surface, beneath the surface, or in the waters of the land from which any useful product may be produced, extracted or obtained, or which is extracted by underground mining methods for underground storage. "Deposit" or "mineral deposit" excludes sand, gravel, rock aggregate, basalt for an area not to exceed 50 acres, water, geothermal steam, and oil and gas, but includes oil shale and bituminous sands extracted by mining operations.

"Development" means the work performed in relation to a deposit following its discovery, but prior to and in contemplation of production mining operations. Development includes, preparing the site for mining operations; further defining the ore deposit by drilling or other means; conducting pilot plant operations; and constructing roads or ancillary facilities.

"Disturbed Area" means the surface land disturbed by mining operations. The disturbed area for small mining operations shall not exceed five acres in an incorporated area of a county or ten acres in an unincorporated area of a county. The disturbed area for large mining operations shall not exceed the acreage described in the approved notice of intention.

"Division" means the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining. The Division Director or designee is the Presiding Officer for any informal adjudicative proceedings which commence before the Division in accordance with Section R647-5.

"Exempt Mining Operations" means those mining operations which were previously exempt from the Act because less than 500 tons of material was mined in a period of twelve consecutive months or less than two acres of land was excavated or used as a disposal site in a period of twelve consecutive months. These exemptions were eliminated by statutory amendments in 1986 and are no longer available.

"Exploration" means surface disturbing activities conducted to discover a deposit or mineral deposit, delineating the boundaries of a deposit or mineral deposit, and identifying regions or specific areas in which deposits or mineral deposits are most likely to exist. "Exploration" includes: sinking shafts; tunneling; drilling holes; digging pits or cuts; building roads and other access ways.

"Gravel" means a naturally occurring unconsolidated to moderately consolidated accumulation of rock and mineral particles, the dominant size range being between 4mm and 75mm, which has been deposited by sedimentary processes.

"Land affected" means the surface and subsurface of an area within the state where mining operations are being or will be conducted, including: (a) on-site private ways, roads, and railroads; (b) land excavations; (c) exploration sites; (d) drill sites or workings; (e) refuse banks or spoil piles; (f) evaporation or settling ponds; (g) stockpiles; (h) leaching dumps; (i) placer areas; (j) tailings ponds or dumps; (k) work, parking, storage, or waste discharge areas, structures, and facilities. Land affected does not include: (x) lands which have been reclaimed in accordance with an approved plan or as otherwise approved by the Board, (y) lands on which mining operations ceased prior to July 1, 1977, or (z) lands on which previously exempt mining operations ceased prior to April 29, 1989.

"Large Mining Operations" means mining operations which have a disturbed area of more than 10 surface acres at any time in an incorporated area of a county or more than 20 surface acres at any time in an unincorporated area of a county.

"License" means a franchise, permit, certification, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization required by statute.

"Mining operations" means those activities conducted on the surface of the land for the exploration for, development of, or extraction of a mineral deposit, including, surface mining and the surface effects of underground and in situ mining; on-site transportation, concentrating, milling, evaporation, and other primary processing. "Mining operation" does not include: the extraction of sand, gravel, and rock aggregate; the extraction of basalt for an area not to exceed fifty acres; the extraction of oil and gas; the extraction of geothermal steam; smelting or refining operations; off-site operations and transportation; reconnaissance activities; or activities which will not cause significant surface resource disturbance and do not involve the use of mechanized earth-moving equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes.

"Notice of Intention" means a notice of intention to commence mining operations, that provide the complete information required for authorization to conduct mining operations, and includes any amendments or revisions thereto.

"Off-site" means the land areas that are outside of or beyond the on-site land.

"On-site" means the surface lands on or under which surface or underground mining operations are conducted. A series of related properties under the control of a single operator but separated by small parcels of land controlled by others will be considered a single site unless excepted by the Division.

"Operator" means any natural person, corporation, association, partnership, receiver, trustee, executor, administrator, guardian, fiduciary, agent, or other organization or representative of any kind, either public or private, owning, controlling, conducting, or managing a mining operation or proposed mining operation.

"Owner" means any natural person, corporation, association, partnership, receiver, trustee, executor, administrator, guardian, fiduciary, agent, or other organization or representative of any kind, either public or private, owning, controlling, conducting, or managing a mineral deposit or the surface of lands employed in mining operations.

"Party" means the Board, Division or other person commencing an adjudicative proceeding, any respondents, any persons permitted by the Board to intervene in the proceeding, and any persons authorized by statute or agency rule to participate as parties in an adjudicative proceeding.

"Permit" means a notice to conduct mining operations issued by the Division. A notice to conduct mining operations is issued by the Division when either a notice of intention for a small mining operation or exploration is determined to be complete and includes a surety approved by the Division, or a notice of intention for a large mining operation or exploration with a plan of operations and surety approved by the Division.

"Person" means an individual, group of individuals, partnership, corporation, association, political subdivision or its units, governmental subdivision or its units, public or private organization or entity of any character, or another agency.

"Presiding Officer" means an agency head, or an individual or body of individuals designated by the agency head, by the agency's rules, or by statute to conduct an adjudicative proceeding. For these rules, the Board, or its appointed Hearing Examiner, shall be considered the Presiding Officer of any appeals of informal adjudicative proceedings which commenced before the Division as well as any adjudicative proceedings which commence before the Board. The Division Director or his/her designee shall be considered a Presiding Officer for any informal adjudicative proceedings which commence before the Division in accordance with this Section R647-5. If fairness to the parties is not compromised, an agency may substitute one Presiding Officer for another during any proceeding.

"Reclamation" means actions performed during or after mining operations to shape, stabilize, revegetate, or otherwise treat the land affected in order to achieve a safe and ecologically stable condition and use which will be consistent with local environmental conditions and land management practices.

"Regrade or Grade" means to physically alter the topography of any land surface.

"Respondent" means any person against whom an adjudicative proceeding is initiated, whether by an agency or any other person.

"Revision" means a change to an approved Notice of Intention to Conduct Mining Operations, which will increase or decrease the amount of land affected, or alter the location and type of on-site surface facilities, such that the nature of the reclamation plan will differ substantially from that in the approved Notice of Intention.

"Rock Aggregate" means those consolidated rock materials associated with a sand deposit, a gravel deposit, or a sand and gravel deposit, that were created by alluvial sedimentary processes. The definition of rock aggregate specifically excludes any solid rock in the form of bedrock, other than basalt, which is exposed at the surface of the earth or overlain by unconsolidated material.

"Sand" means a naturally occurring unconsolidated to moderately consolidated accumulation of rock and mineral particles, the dominant size range being between 0.004mm to 4mm, which has been deposited by sedimentary processes.

"Shut Down" means an absence of onsite mining operations on any land affected under a complete or approved notice of intention where the operator intends that mining operations are permanently terminated, or the Division, after notice, makes a determination pursuant to R647-3-113.7 or R647-4-117.6.

"Small Mining Operations" means mining operations which have a disturbed area of 10 or fewer surface acres at any time in an incorporated area of a county or 20 or fewer surface acres at any time in an unincorporated area of a county.

"Surface Mining" means mining conducted on the surface of the land including open pit, strip, or auger mining; dredging; quarrying; leaching; surface evaporation operations; reworking abandoned dumps and tailings and activities related thereto.

"Suspension" means an absence of ongoing operations on any land affected under an approved notice of intention, where the operator intends that operations will eventually resume.

"Underground Mining" means mining carried out beneath the surface by means of shafts, tunnels or other underground mine openings.

KEY: minerals reclamation

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: October 29, 2020

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Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: 40-8-1 et seq.