

PADEP Revises Air Pollution and Noise Control Plans for Three Mine Permits

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On October 8, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) revised the air pollution and noise control plans that apply to the following permit applications: Bituminous Surface Mine Permit 5600-PM-BMP0311, Anthracite Surface Mine Permit Application 5600-PM-BMP0343, and Large Noncoal Industrial Minerals Mine Permit 5600-PM-BMP0315.

The new air pollution and noise control plan requirements for all three application types asks applicants to identify if there will be any processing facilities (crushing, screening, cleaning, and/or stockpiling) in the permit area, and asks applicants to describe those facilities and the amount of minerals to be processed. If the amount of minerals to be processed is less than 200 tons/day, these plans require applicants to describe the management practice to be utilized to control fugitive dust, and if the amount of minerals to be processed is equal to or greater than 200 tons/day, the plans direct the applicant to contact the appropriate PADEP Regional Office Air Quality Program.

To control fugitive dust, the plans ask applicants to describe the practices that will be utilized at the surface mining operation for the following activities: access roads, truck traffic, drilling, overburden removal and coal extraction, stockpiles, loading and unloading, crushing and other processing equipment, and conveyers.

The plans also ask applicants to list all noise sources from equipment and mining activity that will originate within the permit area, indicating the hours of operations for this equipment and whether the permit area is adjacent to any residential areas, schools, hospitals, or churches. The plans require applicants to describe the pre-mining environmental sound levels in the permit area at various points of the day and ask if a noise study has been conducted within the surrounding area. Finally, the plans ask applicants to describe the measures (best management practices) that will be taken to mitigate noise and prevent noise from becoming a public nuisance.

The air pollution and noise control plan for the Large Noncoal Industrial Minerals Mine Permit 5600-PM-BMP0315 contains one additional requirement that is not included in the Bituminous Surface Mine Permit 5600-PM-BMP0311 or Anthracite Surface Mine Permit Application 5600-PM-BMP0343. The Large Noncoal Industrial Minerals Mine Permit plan requires applicants to provide the date that the PADEP Regional Air Quality Office was contacted or, if applicable, provide a copy of the PADEP Air Quality Program's determination to grant an exemption from the air quality permit requirements and of any authorizations granted under the Air Quality General Operating Permit for Portable Nonmetallic Mineral Processing Plants.

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