

Measures in place to Curb Air Pollution in Coal Mines

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The government has already issued the following guidelines to curb air pollution in existing coal mines throughout the country-

1. Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification, 2006, prescribes that the project proponent has to study the Environmental impacts and adopt suitable Environmental Management Plan to ensure the protection of Environment.
2. The coal mining standards (Notification No. GSR 742(E), dated 25.09.2000, prescribes standards to be maintained within the core zone of existing & new mines.
3. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), 2009, prescribes the standards to be maintained in Buffer zone surrounding the mines.

In adherence to the Government acts & policies issued from time to time, Coal PSUs are taking necessary steps during the construction and operational stage of mining operations in such a way that the sustainable industrial development is accompanied by both industrial and sound eco-friendly environment protection activities. Project Proponent/mine owner are required to submit six monthly compliance report to Central Government, State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) and Central pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Central Government (MoEF&CC) has notified environmental standards for coal mines. SPCBs/PCCs are empowered to regulate the industrial activities including coal mine activities, and enforcement of environment standards through grant of Consent to Establish and/or Consent to Operate. The Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 includes provisions for monitoring of compliance of environmental standards as applicable. Also, provisions of show-cause notice/closure for non-compliance are mentioned in the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Ministry of Coal has established Sustainability & Just Transition (S&JT) Division to monitor different Sustainable Developmental Activities in the coal mines. The following activities to curb the air pollution are being monitored -

- i. Bio-reclamation/plantation
- ii. Dust suppression technologies
- iii. First Mile Connectivity projects
- iv. Adoption of eco-friendly technologies such as Surface Miner, In-pit crushing & conveying technologies etc.,

The Environmental norms are complied by Coal PSUs in the following ways:-

- For opening new mine/project prior Environmental Clearance (EC) is secured from MoEF&CC

under Environment (Protection) Act & Rules, 1986 and EIA Notification, 2006 and subsequent amendments.

- In compliance of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, prior Forestry Clearance is also secured from MoEF&CC, in case of projects involving forest land.
- In case of Expansion Projects (for enhancement in Production Capacity and / or land area) prior Environmental Clearance is also secured from MoEF&CC under Environment (Protection) Act & Rules, 1986 and EIA Notification, 2006 and subsequent amendments.
- After receipt of EC, Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO) are also secured from respective State Pollution Control Board under Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974;
- During implementation of the project, Six-monthly Environmental Compliance Report against the stipulated EC conditions are submitted to MoEF&CC.
- In compliance of the EC/ CTE/ CTO conditions, regular environmental monitoring with respect to ambient air quality, effluent quality, noise level monitoring and ground water (both levels and quality) are monitored and reports are submitted to MoEF&CC / State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) / Central Ground Water Board (CGWB).
- In compliance of the statute, Annual Environmental (Audit) Statement for the preceding financial year for each operating mine is submitted to respective SPCB on or before 30th September every year.
- In compliance of EC and Consent conditions, various pollution control measures are undertaken which are regularly augmented / strengthened.
- CAAQMS data is shared with SPCB/ CPCB/ MoC for continuous monitoring of Ambient Air Quality in respective mines.

This information was given by Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

BY/RKP

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