

## Health and Welfare Measures for Mine Workers

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The safety, health and welfare of workers employed in mines is regulated by the Mines Act, 1952 and the Rules/ Regulations framed thereunder which are administered by the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) under the Ministry of Labour & Employment. This Act and Rules & Regulations framed thereunder have provisions to prevent occupational diseases in mines like medical examination before employment, periodical medical examination at an interval of 5 years, use of Personal Protective Equipment and Occupational Health Survey.

Under the said Act, Engineering control measures on prevention and generation of air-borne dust at workplace are provided under Regulation 124 of the Metalliferous Mines Regulation, 1961. As per the said regulation, miners shall take such steps as are necessary for the minimising of emissions of dust and for the suppression of dust which enters the air at any work place below ground or on surface and for ensuring that the exposure of workers to respirable dust is limited to an extent that is reasonably practicable but in any case not exceeding the limits that are harmful to the health of persons. It also provides that dust shall be suppressed as close as possible to its source of formation to prevent its liberation/accumulation and a jet of water shall be used throughout the drilling or boring operation to prevent the atmosphere being charged with dust.

The State Governments grant mineral concessions under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957. On successful completion of the auction process, the successful bidder is mandated to seek statutory clearances viz. environmental before signing the lease deed and taking up mining operation. Environment Clearance takes into account Land, Air & Water environment, vegetation, fauna, aesthetics, Socio-Economic aspects, building materials, energy conservation and Environment Management Plan.

As per Rule 35(2) of the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR), 2017, every holder of Mining Lease shall monitor his mining & allied activities as per the template of Star rating and shall achieve at least threestar rating as part of Sustainable mining. The Star rating template inter alia also captures ambient air quality as per the standards laid down by MoEF&CC.

Further, as per Rule 40 of MCDR, 2017, every holder of prospecting licence or a mining lease shall take all possible measure to keep air pollution due to fines, dust, smoke or gaseous emissions during prospecting, mining, beneficiation or metallurgical operations and related activities within permissible limits. As per Rule 43 of MCDR, 2017, the standards and permissible limits of all pollutants, toxins and noise shall be such as may be notified by the concerned authorities under the provisions of the relevant laws for the time being in force.

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