




Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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JB Pritzker, Governor
Colleen Callahan, Director

LAND RECLAMATION DIVISION Memorandum No. 2020-02 Revised

To: All Coal Mine Operators/Consultants

From: Ronnie Huff, Director
Office of Mines and Minerals 

Date: September 26, 2022

Re: Requests for Neutralizing Material Rate for Refuse Cover

NOTE: This Memorandum supersedes Operator Memorandum 2020-02 issued on January 17, 2020.

The regulations found at 62 Ill. Adm. Code 1816/1817.71(o) require any excess spoil that is acid- or toxic-forming to be adequately covered or treated to control the impact on surface and groundwater, to prevent sustained combustion, and to minimize adverse effects on plant growth. Additionally, Section 1816/1817.83(c)(4) allows the Department to require the addition of neutralization material to be added to the coal mine waste, if the material is needed to prevent acid mine drainage.

The Department has determined that all requests for the addition of neutralizing materials shall be formally submitted for review and response. These requests may come in as part of an Abandonment and Closure of Refuse Disposal Areas (Part 9.4 of the Permit Application) or as a stand-alone Insignificant Permit Revision (IPR).

Stand-alone Insignificant Permit Revisions shall include an engineering sealed report certifying that grading of slopes, benches, bench drainage ditches, haul roads, haul roads drainage ditches and down-drains into coarse coal refuse was performed in accordance with the approved plan. The sealed report shall include the Department's Refuse Pile Engineering Certification Form or Impoundment Engineering Certificate Form and shall be accompanied by appropriate cross sections, profiles drawings and plan view of all of the graded areas that are proposed for neutralizing material placement and soil covering.

At a minimum, all requests for the addition of neutralizing materials must include:

- 1) An Acid Base Accounting (ABA) of the material to be covered (slurry and/or coarse refuse, as applicable*);
- 2) The approved final cover thickness. If a refuse cover variance was granted, provide the date of that approval and, where applicable, the permitting action of the approval (e.g. IPR No. 1 to Permit No. 1000);
- 3) A map showing the slurry and/or coarse refuse sampling location(s). The Department recommends a sampling grid of 1 acre at a depth of 6 inches;
- 4) Identification of the neutralizing material proposed for use;
- 5) An ABA of the neutralizing material proposed for use**;
- 6) The applicant's proposed neutralizing material application rate; and
- 7) A map showing the areas proposed for neutralizing material placement and soil covering.

**Please note, the refuse ABA must be recent (less than six (6) months old) and collected from non-weathered refuse.*

***Also note, the ABA of the neutralizing material must be less than twelve (12) months old.*

Upon receipt of this information, the Department will provide a written response that clearly outlines the approved neutralizing material application rate(s) and the proposed final cover thickness.

Lime Rate/Neutralizing Material Approvals will expire three (3) years from the original approval date, as soil placement/reclamation activities are expected to occur within weeks-to-months of approval for a specific area.

Neutralizing materials shall be incorporated into the refuse materials a minimum of six (6) inches, up to a maximum twelve (12) inches.

The Department will evaluate the use of Lime Sludge materials (Waste Water/Sewage Treatment Sludge, Drinking Water Treatment Sludge, etc.) on a case-by-case basis.

Please also refer to the Department's Technical Guidance Document No. 5 and/or the Department's SCML-9 Refuse Cover Variance Request Form for additional information.

The Department will attempt to continue to review these requests in an expeditious manner to allow the continued contemporaneous reclamation to occur in a timely manner.