

Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR REGULATION BRANCH INSPECTIONS

The Regulation Branch of the Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation (BMRR) performs inspections of mining facilities. Regulation Branch inspections are in addition to inspections performed by the Reclamation and Closure Branches of the BMRR. There are several types of Regulation Branch inspections performed:

1. Compliance Inspections - These inspections are performed by the Compliance Inspectors. The inspections are scheduled on a periodic basis with varying frequency depending on the size of the facility and the potential to degrade waters of the State. The goal is to inspect large sites at least four times a year, medium sites twice a year, and small or inactive sites once a year. An annual inspection schedule is prepared at the beginning of each calendar year. The inspections are performed in accordance with the Compliance Inspection Guidelines.
2. Permit/Construction Inspections - These inspections are performed by the Permit Writers. They are performed on an as-needed basis, usually before a permit is issued, or corresponding with significant construction activity. The purpose of these inspections is to familiarize the Permit Writer with the layout of a new facility or to ensure that construction of process components is in accordance with the approved engineering design.
3. Investigative Inspections – These inspections are performed in response to a release of contaminants or a complaint requiring follow-up by the BMRR. These inspections are performed by the Compliance Inspector. The purpose of these inspections is to investigate and document the severity and extent of a release in preparation for potential enforcement action, or to evaluate the validity of a complaint and recommend corrective actions.

The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and or other State, federal and local government agencies may attend a BMRR Regulation Branch inspection. The permittee is notified in advance for most inspections, except for certain investigative inspections where forewarning is not desirable. Photos or video recordings are taken as necessary to document conditions at the site.

An Inspection Report is prepared to document each inspection. Noted in the report are any problems or concerns identified during the inspection, and deadlines for corrective action if required. The Report is sent in letter form to the permittee, with copies to the federal land management agency, if applicable. The Reports and associated documentation are kept in the BMRR project files.