ADEQ’s Mission
To protect, enhance and restore the natural environment for the well-being of all Arkansans

ADEQ: What We Do
The Department of Environmental Quality is an agency of the state of Arkansas. We are headquartered in North Little Rock and have offices and inspectors throughout the state.

Our regulatory programs for air, water, solid waste, hazardous waste, regulated storage tanks and mining help protect the environment. We issue operating permits for businesses and farms and monitor for compliance.

We also manage many proactive programs to assist businesses, educators and the public with regulatory, recycling and other issues.

Helpline: (501) 682-0923
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Coal Mining and Reclamation

The Arkansas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act
The Arkansas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Code

Other Contacts

- US Department of Interior
  Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
  1951 Constitution Ave. NW
  Washington, DC 20240

- Mine Safety and Health Administration
  700 W. Capitol, Room 2420
  Little Rock, AR 72201
  501-324-5281

- Water Division
  Arkansas Dept. of Environmental Quality
  501-682-0656

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
5301 Northshore Drive
North Little Rock, AR 72218

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Introduction

In 1977, Congress passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977. This law established performance standards for coal mining operations for protecting society and the environment from the adverse effects of coal mining operations.

In 1979, the state legislature passed the Arkansas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Act of 1979. This act authorized the state to develop, adopt, issue and amend rules and regulations pertaining to surface coal mining and reclamation operations. These regulations must be consistent with, but no more restrictive than, the federal regulations. The Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission in 1980 adopted Regulation No. 20, the Arkansas Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation Code.

The ADEQ Surface Mining and Reclamation Division handles the reclamation of abandoned coal mines that existed prior to regulations. A trust fund is contributed to by a fee assessed on every ton of coal mined in the country. A portion of this money is used for the reclamation of pre-law abandoned coal mine sites.

Key Elements of the Act

- The surface coal mining permit is active for up to five years.
- Work cannot begin until all permitting requirements are met, public notice periods are completed and the permit is issued.
- Regulation No. 20 sets performance and reclamation standards.
- Operators must complete reclamation upon expiration of the permit.
- A bond is posted to cover reclamation costs if an operator fails to reclaim the site to standards set in Reg. No. 20.
- A fee is assessed on coal mined in the United States and is placed in a trust fund that is used for reclamation of pre-law abandoned mine sites.
- The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration regulates safety and health issues for coal mine employees.
- The ADEQ’s Water Division regulates discharge of stormwater and process water.

Mining Contacts

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The ADEQ Helpline can serve as a helpful first contact with the agency. Call 501-682-0923.