

Exploring the FUTURE

MINING AND MINERAL EXPLORATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mining is British Columbia's third largest industry, and the safest of all heavy industries in the province. Injury rates in both metal and coal mining fell steadily through the 1990s to a rate of two injuries per 100 man-years of employment. Health and safety measures for workers, as well as the public, are administered by the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The Mines Branch works closely with companies to help ensure a safe, healthy workplace.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Mines Branch

The Mines Branch is staffed by qualified, experienced health and safety inspectors whose work is augmented by specialist inspectors with particular expertise in areas such as mechanical and electrical engineering, emergency preparedness, ergonomics and industrial hygiene.

The branch administers and regulates health and safety through the full mining cycle – including exploration, development, production, reclamation and closure – for metal, placer, industrial mineral and coal mines, as well as for sand and gravel operations. These activities are governed by the Mines Act and the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia, commonly known as the Code.

Activities

Health and safety inspectors work with operating mines to ensure compliance with the Code. They also work in collaboration with mine-site health and safety committees to minimize risk to workers and the public. Other activities include:

- issuing permits for explosive use and storage;
- certifying supervisors, shift bosses and blasters under the *Mines Act*;
- monitoring mine activity;
- approving health and safety components of mine plans;
- collecting data and keeping records on accidents, dangerous occurrences, inspection frequencies and audiometric activity; and, participating in health and safety research.

The ministry also organizes annual mine rescue and first aid competitions, as well as a Safety Awards Competition to recognize outstanding safety efforts by mine managers and workers. In addition, the provincial government is the major

contributor to the semi-annual Western Regional Mine Rescue competitions.

Fees

Mines in British Columbia pay a health and safety inspection fee to finance the health and safety section of the Mines Branch. Fees are also paid to the Workers Compensation Board to offset the cost of compensating injured workers.

Health and safety inspection fees are applied based on the following formula:

Major Mines including coal (surface and underground), metal (surface and underground), exploration, industrial minerals, custom mill, metal leach and placer pay fees at a rate of \$0.52 per \$100 of assessable earnings.

Sand and Gravel, Quarry and Limestone Operations have fees assessed based on tons of total production per year as outlined in the chart below:

Tons per year	Annual Fee
less than 10,001	\$ 100
10,001 - 25,000	\$ 300
25,001 - 50,000	\$ 600
50,001 - 100,000	\$1,300
more than 100,000	\$2,500

These fees do not apply to sand and gravel, and quarry and limestone operations owned and operated by provincial, regional and municipal governments. The fees do apply to government-owned pits operated by subcontractors.

For more information, contact:

Ministry of Energy and Mines, Mines Branch
PO Box 9320, Stn Prov Govt, 4th floor, 1810 Blanshard St.,
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9N3

Phone: 250 952-0462 Fax: 250 952-0491

www.gov.bc.ca/em



Ministry of Energy
and Mines

FACT SHEET