Managing *Mines Act* Reporting and Compliance during the COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The mining industry and mining regulators are facing a rapidly changing situation as we cope with the effects of COVID-19 in our province. Everyone in B.C. must follow the orders and directives issued by the Provincial Health Officer to protect public health and we recognize that this could impact day-to-day operations of regulated activities under the *Mines Act*.

*Mines Act*, Health, Safety and Reclamation Code, and Permit requirements remain in effect and we expect that all reasonable measures will be taken to comply.

Numerous reports are due annually on March 31. In recognition that some sites may be experiencing unavoidable delays related to COVID-19, reports submitted by April 30 will not be considered late by the Chief Inspector of Mines. Requests for extensions beyond April 30 must be submitted in accordance with the guidance provided below. Permittees are also reminded to follow requirements of other authorizations at this time.

Mining companies should carefully review their requirements and develop plans and contingencies to ensure that operations are maintained in accordance with those requirements in both the short- and long-term. If a permit holder is at risk of being in non-compliance, they are to provide notice to EMPRComplianceManagement@gov.bc.ca identifying:

- Permit number, mine name and key contact including phone number
- the non-compliance or potential non-compliance;
- the affected permit condition or section of the Code;
- the cause(s);
- the mitigative measures being taken; and,
- plan to return to compliance.

Health and Safety incidents and Dangerous Occurrences will continue to be reported to the inspector for the region as per normal.

Inquiries unrelated to non-compliance should continue through the usual channels. The Ministry currently has staffing resources in place to maintain all core business functions. E-mail and other regular communication channels remain open and are being monitored regularly.

As part of the government’s response to COVID-19, all non-essential travel by government employees has been curtailed. Mine Inspectors will monitor routine compliance through increased remote communication with mines. Inspectors will attend mine sites on an as-needed basis to follow-up on
emergency events and/or to conduct critical investigations under Section 7 of the Mines Act. In these rare circumstances, Mine Inspectors will contact the mine manager prior to arrival and will submit to mine site screening measures and follow any protocols put in place to protect mine workers from the spread of COVID-19.

For more information about how to make changes to your permit and to access guidance, please visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/mineral-exploration-mining/permitting

For more information on reporting a spill, please visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/spills-environmental-emergencies/report-a-spill

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