

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1419
ANSWERED ON 04.12.2024

Safety Standards for Coal Miners

1419. Shri Parbhubhai Nagarbhai Vasava:

Will the Minister of **COAL** be pleased to state:

- (a) the specific programmes being implemented to improve safety standards for coal miners and reduce occupational hazards like black lung disease;
- (b) whether the Ministry has conducted any studies to assess the impact of coal-fired power plants on the health of nearby communities and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures being taken by the Ministry to improve the safety protocols in coal mines to prevent accidents such as collapses or explosion;
- (d) the current status of compensation schemes for miners affected by workplace accidents or occupational diseases; and
- (e) whether there are any regular training programmes in place for coal miners on occupational hazards and safety practices and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): To improve safety standards, the specific programmes and compliances of statutory provisions in place for coal workers and to reduce occupational hazards are as under:

1. Compliance of the statutory provisions under the Mines Act, 1952, the Mines Rules 1955, The Mine Vocational Training Rules, 1966, The Mines Rescue Rules, 1985, The Mines Creche Rules, 1966 and The Coal Mine Regulations 2017, Bye-laws & Standing Orders framed thereunder to ensure safety in coal mines.
2. Preparation and implementation of Site Specific Risk Assessment based Safety Management Plans (SMPs), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Principal Hazards Management Plans (PHMPs), Code of Practices (COPs) and Emergency Response and Evacuation Plan (EREP).
3. Framing and implementing Mine-specific Transport, Traffic Rules. Imparting Simulator based Training to Heavy Earth Moving Machine Operators.
4. Virtual Reality (VR) based Safety Training. Tool Box Safety Talk, Pre-Shift Safety Briefing before starting any operation, Personal and Family Counseling based sensitization programme
5. Monitoring of Safety through National Coal Mines Safety Report Portal
6. Conducting Safety Audit of mines through multi-disciplinary Safety Audit teams as per Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Coal.
7. Persons detected with black lungs disease are provided with suitable jobs, such as surface and in non-dust working places and regularly kept under dust free non-hazardous environment and attend periodical medical examination once every year at Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) centres.

(b): Central Government has not conducted study to assess health impact of coal-fired power plant on nearby population. However, at the initial stage, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies are conducted for all the thermal power plants and based on that Environment Management Plan (EMP) is prepared and submitted to the competent authority. Besides this, for every thermal power station, there is provision for continuous monitoring of Environmental parameters, Air Quality (CO₂, Oxides of nitrogen and sulfur), Temperature, etc. Conducting Health Survey of the nearby communities.

(c): The following measures are taken by coal companies to improve the safety protocols in coal mines to prevent accidents such as collapses or explosion:

1. All coal mines are scientifically planned and designed by expert agencies, such as Central Mine Planning & Design Institute (CMPDI), based on geo-technical and geo-mining conditions to ensure structural stability and prevent premature collapse of any mine or its sections.

2. Before starting a mechanized Opencast Mine, the working methods, ultimate pit slope, dump slope and slope stability monitoring, is scientifically planned and designed as per the findings of a scientific study done by an expert scientific/ research institutions.

3. In underground mines, Strata Control and Monitoring Plan (SCAMP) is prepared based on scientific study(ies) done by expert scientific / research institutions detailed under Coal mine Regulation numb104. The said SCAMP is comprised of an approved support plan, which includes the types, specifications, and supports for each working place. The support plan also incorporates the monitoring of the support performance, measurement of strata behaviour, re-setting of supports, provision of temporary support, replacement of old supports, withdrawal of supports etc.

4. Preparation and implementation of Site Specific Risk Assessment based Safety Management Plans (SMPs) including Principal Hazards Management Plans (PHMPs) for strata failure & dump failures and explosions in mines.

5. Mechanism for monitoring of mine environment to avoid explosion inflammable gases:

- Early detection of mine gases by Methanometer, CO-detector, Multi-gas detector etc.
- Continuous monitoring of mine environment by installing Environmental Tele Monitoring System (ETMS) & Local Methane Detectors (LMD) etc.
- Application of the Gas Chromatograph for mine air sample analysis with better accuracy.
- Precautionary measures against spontaneous heating as per reg. 137 of CMR- 2017

(d): The following compensation are provided to the dependent of deceased employee, who died in any mine accident arising out of and in course of employment:

1. Compensation is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Employee's Compensation Act, 1923 (Principal Act), as amended to date.

2. An amount of ₹15 lakhs is paid to the dependent of the deceased employee as special relief/ ex-gratia. This is in addition to the compensation payable under the Employee's Compensation Act, 1923 (as amended).

3. Monetary benefits under the Life Cover Scheme (LCS) are provided to the dependent of the deceased departmental employee as per the provisions of the latest National Coal Wage Agreement (NCWA).

4. Ex-gratia is paid in cases of death or permanent total disablement resulting from an accident arising out of and in the course of employment, as per the provisions of the latest NCWA.

5. Employment is provided to the eligible dependent of a deceased departmental employee. If no family member qualifies for employment, monetary compensation is paid monthly to the family of the deceased in lieu of employment.

(e): Regular training programmes are organized as per provisions made under the Mines Vocational Training Rules (MVTR) – 1966.
