**1970. No. 129** **[C]**

# COAL AND OTHER MINES

## Fire and Rescue

REGULATIONS, DATED 1ST JUNE 1970, MADE BY THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE UNDER SECTIONS 13(2), 72 AND 120 OF THE MINES ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1969.

WHEREAS in pursuance of Part I of Schedule 2 to the Mines Act (Northern Ireland) 1969(a) the Ministry of Commerce has published notice of its intention to make the following regulations and has not received any objection to the draft thereof in respect to which it is required to refer the draft regulations for inquiry and report:

NOW, THEREFORE, the Ministry of Commerce in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sections 13(2), 72 and 120 of the Mines Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following regulations:—

### PART I

### GENERAL

*Citation*

**1.** These regulations may be cited as the Coal and Other Mines (Fire and Rescue) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970.

*Application*

**2.** Except where otherwise expressly provided, Part II of these regulations shall apply to every mine of coal, stratified ironstone, shale or fireclay, Part III thereof to mines of coal, stratified ironstone, shale or fireclay, in which or in part of which the use of lamps or lights, other than permitted lights, is unlawful, and Part IV thereof to every mine of coal or shale, other than a mine at which not more than ten persons are employed below ground, and in these regulations "mine" shall be construed accordingly.

*Interpretation*

**3.** In these regulations the following expressions have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them, that is to say—

"the Act" means the Mines Act (Northern Ireland) 1969;

"fresh air base" has the meaning assigned thereto in regulation 23;

"mine" has the meaning assigned thereto in regulation 2;

"the Ministry" means the Ministry of Commerce.

---

(a) 1969. c. 6 (N.I.).

## PART II

### FIRE PRECAUTIONS AND EQUIPMENT

**4.**—(1) No highly inflammable material shall be stored below ground in any mine except in a fireproof room, compartment or box.

(2) At any mine at which more than thirty persons are employed below ground, no building or structure at the top of any shaft or outlet shall be made of or comprise any inflammable material likely to cause danger from fire to any person so employed.

(3) No engine-room or motor-room below ground in any mine shall be made of or comprise any inflammable material likely to cause danger from fire to any person employed in the mine.

**5.** It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine to secure the provision of suitable and sufficient means of extinguishing fire at each of the following places, that is to say—

(*a*) at the top of and at every entrance to a shaft or outlet, being a place in the construction of which inflammable material is used;

(*b*) in every engine-room, motor-room or boiler gallery, being a place in the construction of which inflammable material is used; and

(*c*) at any place at which inflammable material is stored.

**6.** It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine to secure the provision and readiness for immediate use in case of fire of a sufficient supply of suitable dust or sand in suitable containers at an appropriate place in relation to every electric motor, which is not portable apparatus for the purposes of the Coal and Other Mines (Electricity) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970(**b**), transformer and switchgear installed at the mine.

**7.** It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine, other than a mine which is naturally wet throughout and at which not more than thirty persons are employed below ground, or a mine of stratified ironstone, to secure the provision and readiness for immediate use in case of fire of—

(*a*) an adequate supply of water; or

(*b*) sufficient portable fire extinguishers and a sufficient supply of suitable dust or sand; and

(*c*) appropriate equipment for conveying and using the water, dust or sand in that case;

at appropriate places in relation to each working face and along any length of road below ground, being a length which is a main intake airway or a main return airway for the purposes of the Coal and Other Mines (Ventilation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1970(**c**).

**8.**—(1) It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine, other than a mine at which less than one hundred persons are employed below ground, to secure the provision and readiness for immediate use in case of fire below ground of adequate supplies of water and efficient means for delivering it promptly at adequate pressure and in adequate volume to every place in the mine at which persons work otherwise than occasionally or for short periods or which persons going to or from their working places ordinarily pass, being in either case a place at which fire is liable to occur.

---

(**b**) S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1970, No. 130. (**c**) S.R. & O. (N.I.) 1970, No. 125.

(2) Except in so far as provision is made in pursuance of the last preceding paragraph to deliver water through pipelines and hose extensions to every place at which it is required to be available, provision shall be made for delivery from tanks or barrels by portable manual pumps.

**9.** Where at any mine machinery for cutting or getting mineral is in use at a working face at which an ignition of gas has been or having regard to the nature of the strata is liable to be, produced by such machinery, it shall be the duty of the manager to secure that—

(*a*) the machine is provided with effective means to prevent such ignition; or

(*b*) a portable fire extinguisher or supply of suitable dust or sand in a suitable container is carried on the machine; or

(*c*) if owing to the height of the working it is impracticable to carry such an extinguisher or such a container on the machine, portable fire extinguishers or supplies of suitable dust or sand in suitable containers are provided at suitable intervals along the face and at any point at which an airway, which as regards the face is an intake airway, meets the face.

**10.** No fire extinguisher which is liable when operated to give off poisonous gas shall be provided below ground whether in pursuance of these regulations or otherwise.

**11.**—(1) It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine to make and ensure the efficient carrying out of arrangements—

(*a*) whereby all equipment provided in pursuance of this Part of these regulations is inspected by competent persons appointed by him at intervals not exceeding thirty days; and

(*b*) for the discharge and refilling of each fire extinguisher to ensure that it is maintained in good working order.

(2) Every person making such an inspection shall make a full and accurate report thereon to the manager in writing.

**12.** It shall be the duty of the manager of every mine, other than a mine at which less than one hundred persons are employed below ground, to make arrangements to secure a proper organisation of persons for combating any outbreak of fire and such arrangements shall include fire drills.

## PART III

### PRECAUTIONS IN CASE OF OUTBREAK OR SUSPECTED OUTBREAK OF FIRE

**13.**—(1) Without prejudice to the generality of section 79 of the Act if in any mine there appears any smoke or other sign indicating that a fire has or may have broken out below ground at any place, the persons in charge of any parts of the mine likely to be affected by such a fire, by products of combustion thereof or by any explosion resulting therefrom, shall cause all persons employed at any place likely to be so affected to leave it:

Provided that in any case in which it appears to the person in charge of the part of the mine from which that sign emanates that there exists no immediate danger persons may remain there for the purpose of preventing danger from arising.

(2) Where on any occasion persons have been caused to leave any place in pursuance of the provisions of the last preceding paragraph, no person shall thereafter be permitted to enter it until after examination thereof it is reported safe for him to do so either by the manager or an under-manager of the mine and by two members of the panel appointed for the mine under section 105 of the Act or, if they do not concur, by an inspector:

Provided that nothing in this paragraph shall be taken to prohibit a person from entering any place for the purpose of saving life, ascertaining the condition of that place, ascertaining or taking any measures that it is necessary to take for the purpose of rendering it safe or ascertaining the effectiveness of such measures:

Provided also that the concurrence of two members of the said panel shall not be required if such persons are not available within a reasonable period after the manager or an under-manager of the mine has informed the person for the time being nominated to receive notices under subsection (1) of section 98 of the Act of the occurrence.

(3) Any report under the last preceding paragraph shall be a full and accurate report signed by the persons making it and the position of the fire or suspected fire shall, if possible, be indicated by means of a plan. A copy of any such report shall forthwith be posted at the pithead.

(4) If on any occasion it is ascertained that fire has broken out at any place the following parts of the mine shall be deemed for the purposes of paragraph (1) of this regulation to be affected, that is to say, all parts of the seam in which the fire exists and all parts of any other seam reached from an entrance below ground to a shaft or outlet being an entrance from which the first mentioned seam is reached:

Provided that a part of the mine other than that in which the fire exists shall be deemed not to be affected if it is protected against the spread thereto of any explosion by means approved by the Ministry for the purposes of this regulation, and a seam other than that in which the fire exists shall be deemed not to be affected if it is naturally wet throughout.

(5) If on any occasion a fire is being dammed off all parts of the mine below ground shall be deemed for the purposes of paragraph (1) of this regulation to be affected, and until the work is completed no person shall be permitted to go below ground except for the purposes of that work or otherwise for securing the safety of the mine.

(6) If on any occasion it is ascertained that fire has broken out at any place measures shall be taken to render harmless any coal dust in accessible parts of the mine contiguous to the fire.

## PART IV

## RESCUE

*Establishment of a scheme of emergency procedure*

**14.** It shall be the duty both of the owner and of the manager of every mine to make arrangements for prompt action and conduct of operations for rescue and other necessary work at that mine after an explosion or a fire, or in an atmosphere which is or may be irrespirable, thereat, such arrangements to be in accordance with the following provisions of this Part of these regulations and to be drawn up in a scheme of emergency procedure to be approved by the Ministry.