

351.070 Duties of the commissioner -- Office of Mine Safety and Licensing -- Secretary may promulgate administrative regulations -- Financial liaison -- Civil monetary penalties.

- (1) The commissioner shall have full authority over the department and shall superintend and direct the activities of the mine inspectors and other personnel of the department. There is created within the Department for Natural Resources an Office of Mine Safety and Licensing.
- (2) The secretary shall appoint an executive director to the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing in accordance with KRS 224.10-020(2) and prescribe his powers and duties.
- (3) The commissioner may, whenever necessary, divide the coal fields of the state into as many inspection districts as necessary, so as to equalize as nearly as practicable the work of each inspector, and may assign to the inspectors their respective districts.
- (4) The commissioner may, whenever he or she deems it necessary in the interest of efficient supervision of the mines, temporarily employ the services of additional mine inspectors or change inspectors from one (1) district to another.
- (5) The commissioner shall superintend and direct the inspection of mines and cause to be investigated the character and quality of air in mines whenever conditions indicate the necessity of doing so.
- (6) The commissioner shall collect statistics relating to coal mining in the state and make an annual report of the statistics.
- (7) The commissioner shall see that maps, plans, projections, and proposed developments of all underground coal mines are made and filed in his office.
- (8) The commissioner shall keep a properly indexed, permanent record of all inspections made by himself and the personnel of the department.
- (9) The commissioner shall exercise general supervision over the training of officials and workmen in safety and first aid and mine rescue methods, and may conduct demonstrations in safety whenever he deems it advisable.
- (10) The commissioner shall exercise general supervision over the dissemination of information among officials and employees concerning mine ventilation, mining methods, and mine accidents and their prevention, and shall assume full charge in the event of mine fire or explosion or other serious accident at any mine in the state.
- (11) The commissioner may assist in the resumption of operations of any mine or gather data for the development of any coal seams that would be of any benefit to the state or create new employment.
- (12) The commissioner may prescribe reasonable safety standards governing the use of explosives, and electrical and mechanical equipment in the operation of open-pit or surface mines.
- (13) The secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet shall have the power and authority to promulgate, amend, or rescind any administrative regulations he or she deems necessary and suitable for the proper administration of this chapter.

Administrative regulations may be promulgated, amended, or rescinded by the secretary only after public hearing or an opportunity to be heard thereon of which proper notice by publication pursuant to KRS Chapter 424, has been given. Administrative regulations so promulgated shall carry the full force and effect of law.

- (14) The commissioner shall ascertain the cause or causes of any coal mining fatality and any accidents involving serious physical injury and, within sixty (60) days of completion of the investigation, shall report his or her findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Mine Safety Review Commission, the Mining Board, and the Legislative Research Commission. Accident interviews conducted by the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing shall be closed proceedings. The recommendations may include without being limited to the need to promulgate or amend administrative regulations to prevent the recurrence of the conditions causing the fatality. Effective January 1, 2009, the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing shall appoint an existing full-time employee to act as a family liaison. The family liaison shall have the responsibility during an accident investigation to keep the families of miners informed of the progress and findings of the accident investigation. The family liaison shall be trained in mining and in grief counseling.
- (15) The commissioner shall assess civil monetary penalties against licensed facilities for violations of laws in this chapter and KRS Chapter 352 pertaining to roof control plans, mine seal construction plans, unsafe working conditions, and mine ventilation plans that could lead to imminent danger or serious physical injury. The Energy and Environment Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations within ninety (90) days of July 12, 2006, providing for the manner and method of the assessment of the penalties and appeals therefrom. In no event shall the civil penalty assessed pursuant to this subsection for the violation exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000). Nothing contained in this subsection shall be construed to impair or contravene the authority granted under KRS 351.025(2) for imposing penalties against licensed facilities.

Effective: July 15, 2010

History: Amended 2010 Ky. Acts ch. 24, sec. 1897, effective July 15, 2010. -- Amended 2007 Ky. Acts ch. 94, sec. 3, effective June 26, 2007. -- Amended 2006 Ky. Acts ch. 185, sec. 8, effective July 12, 2006. -- Amended 2005 Ky. Acts ch. 123, sec. 59, effective June 20, 2005. -- Amended 2001 Ky. Acts ch. 149, sec. 4, effective March 20, 2001. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 308, sec. 4, effective April 9, 1996. - - Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 488, sec. 2, effective July 15, 1994. -- Amended 1972 Ky. Acts ch. 298, sec. 4. -- Amended 1966 Ky. Acts ch. 239, sec. 210. -- Amended 1952 Ky. Acts ch. 162, sec. 4. -- Recodified 1942 Ky. Acts ch. 208, sec. 1, effective October 1, 1942, from Ky. Stat. sec. 2739-7.

Legislative Research Commission Note (4/9/96). The action taken with respect to this statute by 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 308 was to have become effective April 8, 1996, under Section 51 of that Act. The Act, however, did not become effective until April 9, 1996, when the Governor's signed copy of the Act was filed with the Secretary of State.