

Blasting Article

Blasting and Use of Explosives was extremely outdated and NCUCA members had been cited for violations for which there was no viable alternative or violations that were technically contrary to the standard but had been standard practices, without incident, for many years. Probably the most cited violation was drilling within 50 feet of a loaded hole. The standard was revised to allow drilling in proximity to a loaded hole as long as it is not drilled “so that it would intersect a loaded hole”. This allowed loading a hole as soon as it is drilled and while the drill is idle and then drilling another hole. Loading and drilling cannot be carried out at the same time within 50’ of each other but can be done on an alternate basis.

The old standard did not address Non-EI or Shock Tube detonation. The standard now addresses shock tube detonation and removes the two way radio warning signs when using non electric detonators. In fact as long as the “Blaster in charge” has control only the general warning signs are required. No examples are included in the standard.

The old standard said that only the blaster could hook to the battery and fire the shot. The revised standard says that the “Blaster in charge” may designate someone to fire the shot on his signal. This allows the Blaster in charge to be in a better position to observe the “Blast Area” to ensure that all is safe and in order.

Several new definitions were added that clarified the actual area to be controlled and what can take place within specific areas. It also allows IME 22 containers for transporting explosives.

Some blasters had been cited for using empty explosives boxes to carry stemming to the hole and pouring that stemming out of the corner of that box. Boxes are now allowed to be used for “blasting operations” and then disposed of “in a manner that prevents reuse and does not constitute a hazard”.

The new standard also makes it clear that explosives and detonators can be transported on a single vehicle when “separated and segregated “. It also

makes it clear that equipment needed to place overburden or blasting mats can be operated as necessary within 50 feet of a loaded hole.

The old standard prohibited trying to remove a misfire and in the same sentence told how to remove that same misfire. The new standard details who, how, and what to do in case of a misfire. The complete new standard is printed in the front of the NCAC standards book and the old standard is printed under Subpart U in the same book.