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Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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EXPLOSIVES ON THE FARM

NEW REGULATIONS FOR EXPLOSIVES

By The Explosives Branch, Mines Department

THE Explosives Regulations, 1963, are now in operation and the new rules will affect purchase and keeping of explosives by small users.

Most farmers find it necessary to use explosives at some time but their needs are small and rarely will the farmer require a licensed magazine.

The regulations provide that explosives may be kept for private use and not for sale without license provided the quantity does not exceed 50 lb. (1 case) and 100 detonators. It is also provided that such explosives must be kept in a safe and secure manner as stated in the regulations.

Permits

The most significant change brought about by the regulations is that small casual users of explosives will now have to obtain permits from the nearest police station before they can make purchases from licensed stores or from the Perth agents. No charge is made for the permit and it can be made to cover any period not exceeding 12 months. At the licensed store the purchaser must show his permit and sign a book in which are recorded all sales made at that store. If the order is placed with Perth agents for supply by rail, then the permit number must be quoted with the order.

No permit is required by any person who already holds a license for a private magazine or by the holder of a tenement under the Mining Act. State and Commonwealth departments of works are also exempt and approved for purchase of casual supplies during the course of work in country districts. Shire councils which have licensed storage will need no permit but those which have no such license should obtain the required permit from the police.

In some country centres there is no police officer and a local magistrate or Justice of the Peace can then be the issuing authority. Some of these have already been supplied with permit books and a book will be forwarded by the Explosives Department to any magistrate or Justice of the Peace who makes the request. It is then the responsibility of the issuing authority to see that permits are issued only to bona fide applicants who have legitimate use for the explosives.

Transport

The regulations allow conveyance of explosives in the boot of a motor car provided the quantity does not exceed 100 lb. (two cases) and the journey is not greater than 50 miles. Detonators should not exceed 500 in number and must be enclosed in a separate box carried in the front of the car. For longer journeys any quantity up to 10 cases may be carried on a truck or utility provided the cases are effectively protected by cover or tarpaulin and the vehicle carries signs at both front and rear with the word “Explosives” in 4-inch letters painted red on a white ground. Detonators must always be enclosed in a wooden box and carried separately in the front of the vehicle. The driver of such a vehicle should take special care that no explosives are lost during the journey and should not leave the vehicle unattended at any time. Any loss of explosives or interference with the vehicle should be reported to the police.

Storage

The regulations require small unlicensed users of explosives to keep their supplies locked in a strong wooden box which should be placed in a lock-up shed and at a safe distance from any flammable goods. Detonators must be kept separately from explosives in a locked box or locked cupboard or drawer. No explosives should be
kept after they are no longer required or after they have deteriorated so as to be unfit for use. Such material should be handed to the police or reported to the Explosives Department so that it can be destroyed in a safe manner.

Use of Explosives

The regulations give some guidance on the use of explosives at places which are not covered by mine and quarry regulations.

No person under 18 years shall be in charge of blasting and no person under 15 years shall enter any place where explosives are being used. For actual preparation of charges and dealing with misfires the user is referred to the Australian Standard Code on the Use of Explosives.

There is no restriction on blasting on larger farm properties but within the limits of a town or city it is necessary to arrange for approval of both police and local authority before blasting can be done. When blasting within a half mile of any dwelling house, it is necessary to notify the police and give 24 hours notice to the occupier of the house. When blasting near a road it is necessary to halt any passing traffic and take precautions that no person is injured by the blast.

The regulations also require a small user to provide a fully-enclosed carrying box for taking explosives into the field and specify the minimum length of fuse as 3 feet for any one shot. Since all fuse burns at 90 seconds per yard this gives ample time to retire and take cover.

Further Details . . .

Members of the police force have been issued with copies of the regulations and police officers have now been given wider powers in dealing with explosives. It is, for example, now considered an offence to possess explosives unless the owner has the prescribed permit or license or is otherwise approved under the regulations. Penalties are prescribed for breaches of the regulations and the maximum fine is £100.

Copies of the Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act, 1961 and Explosives Regulations, 1963, are bound together in one cover and are available at a cost of 7s. 6d. from the Mines Department, Perth.
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