Please see Annex SW1 for supporting information, and the “Introduction” for Health and Safety considerations and advice on the use of the guidance.

1. Agreed Lines of Communication
   It is vitally important that clear lines of communication are agreed with MPA and operator staff, prior to the commencement of any new stage during site working (e.g. soil stripping), particularly if such works are to commence at short notice.

2. Gaining Approval to Commence Work
   The MPA should agree with the operator how approval (or otherwise) of requests to commence work will be communicated. This particularly applies if formal written approval will take too long. However, reasonable notice must be given to the MPA to allow proper consideration and if necessary consultation with others. Regardless of communication method, clear records need to be maintained.

3. Delegated Authority
   Has the site manager given delegated authority to other members of staff to notify and seek approval from the MPA for a new phase of work? Similarly, has the MPA case officer given delegated authority to others to give approval to the commencement of notified work?

4. Monitoring
   How are critical phases, such as soil stripping, going to be monitored, by whom and how frequently? Is work being carried out in accordance with the approved conditions?

5. Internal Consultations
   On many sites, the responsibility for restoration and aftercare may not rest with the site manager. For site working operations, such as soil stripping and storage, has the site manager consulted with those responsible for soil replacement and aftercare of the land?
For more detailed information see:

- MPG7 The Reclamation of Mineral Workings (DoE 1996) (Paragraphs 33-50, 97-102 and Annex A)
- Guidance on Good Practice for the Reclamation of Mineral Workings to Agriculture (DoE 1996) (Pages 13-23)
- Planning Conditions for Mineral Extraction and Waste Management Facilities

Cross references:

- SW 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10
- RN 1
- AC 1
1. Agreed Lines of Communication

In most cases, there will be a planning condition which establishes how much written notice the operator should give to the MPA of the commencement of works. The standard Defra recommended condition states that the MPA shall be notified in writing at least 5 days prior to the commencement of several key stages, including each phase of soil stripping. However, it has to be recognised by all parties that often a shorter notice period may be needed for practical reasons. For example, the timing of soil stripping will largely depend on the weather and soil conditions. Additionally, there may be a requirement to deviate from the agreed phasing plans. For example, the area or depth of any given soil type may differ in reality to that shown on the statement of physical characteristics prepared at the time of the planning application. Therefore, it is good practice for the MPA, operator and other consultants (if applicable) to agree clear lines of communication prior to the commencement of site working. Matters to be agreed should include:

- the method of communication (e.g. phone, fax or e-mail)
- whom to contact (and named alternatives)
- minimum period of notice
- the issues that require prior agreement (e.g. deviation from conditions, changes in phasing etc.)

2. Gaining Approval to Commence Work

Similar to notification above, the MPA should also agree how approval (or otherwise) of short-notice requests to commence work will be communicated to the operator. For the reasons stated above, written notification may take too long. Matters to be agreed should include:

- the method of communicating MPA approval (phone, fax or e-mail)
- names of staff with authority to approve commencement of work
- where approvals should be directed (e.g. site manager)

Regardless of the method of communication, records should be kept, both in the site and MPA offices.

3. Delegated Authority

It is important to be aware of who has authority to make decisions concerning site working or requests to the MPA. If the site manager has delegated authority to another member of staff, how experienced is that person? Conversely, the operator needs to be aware of whom to contact at the MPA with requests for information or notification of work commencing.
4. Monitoring

On sites with significant areas of BMV agricultural land, or complex variations in topsoil and subsoil units across the site, it is very important that the soil is stripped, handled and stored in accordance with the approved planning conditions, soil strategy and soil stripping phasing plans. Therefore, regular monitoring is critical at this stage. Compliance monitoring will help ensure that soil is stripped at the right time and in a manner which minimises damage, maximises the volumes recovered and that they are stored correctly in readiness for the restoration phase. Clear lines of communication between the operator and MPA are essential. For more information see SW4, SW7, SW8, SW9 and SW10.

5. Internal Consultations

With many minerals and waste operators, the responsibility for the site restoration and aftercare rests with members of staff other than the site manager. As explained previously, the operations carried out during the site working stage can have a major impact on the success of the restoration and aftercare phases. Therefore, if the site working responsibilities rest with site managers, have they consulted the person responsible for actions such as soil replacement and aftercare of the land?