

## 10. SAFETY IN HANDLING AND USE OF EXPLOSIVES

### 10.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS:

- a. The use of explosives shall be carried out in a safe manner to avoid injury to any person and under the direct supervision of a responsible person;
- b. No person other than authorized and competent one shall be allowed to handle and use explosives;
- c. Before using any explosive, necessary warning and danger signals shall be erected, at conspicuous places of such use to warn the building workers and the general public of the danger involved in such use.
- d. No person other than authorized and competent one shall be allowed to handle and use explosives.
- e. Smoke, open lamps, other type of hot or heat producing items and sparks shall be prohibited in or near explosives magazines or while explosives are being handled, transported or used.
- f. No person shall be allowed to handle or use explosives while under the influence of intoxicating liquors or dangerous drugs.
- g. The explosives shall be accounted for at all times. No explosives or blasting agents shall be abandoned.
- h. No fire shall be fought where the fire is in the imminent danger of contact with explosives. All employees shall be removed to a safe area and the fire area shall be guarded against intruders.
- i. Employees authorized to prepare explosive charges or conduct blasting operations shall use every reasonable precaution including but not limited to visual and audible warning signals, flags, or barricades to ensure employee safety.
- j. Due precautions shall be taken to prevent accidental discharge of electric blasting caps from current induced by induced voltage, lightning, adjacent power lines, dust storms, or other sources of extraneous electricity or otherwise. These precautions shall include:
- k. Short-circuiting of detonators in holes, which have been primed and shunted until wired into the blasting circuit.
- l. The suspension of all blasting operations and removal of persons from the blasting area during the approach and progress of an electric storm.
- m. The prominent display of adequate signs, warning against the use of radio transmitters, on all roads within 1000 ft of blasting operations. Whenever adherence to the 1000 ft distance would create an operational handicap, a competent and expert person shall be consulted to evaluate the particular situation, and an alternative provided, which are adequately designed to prevent any premature firing of electric blasting of caps. A description of any such blasting shall be reduced to writing and shall be certified as meeting the purposes of this subdivision by the competent person consulted. The description shall be maintained at the construction site during the duration of the work, and shall be available for inspection.

- n. Empty boxes and paper and fiber packing materials, which have previously contained high explosives, shall not be used again for any purpose, but shall be destroyed by burning at an approved location.
- o. Explosives, blasting agents and blasting supplies that are obviously deteriorated or damaged shall not be used.
- p. Delivery and issue of explosives shall only be made authorized persons into authorized magazines or approved temporary storage or handling areas.
- q. Blasting operations in the proximity of overhead power lines, communication lines, utility services, or other services and structures shall not be carried on until the operators and/or owners have been notified and measures for safe control have been taken. In such situations controlled blasting shall be restored to.
- r. All loading and firing shall be directed and supervised by competent persons thoroughly experienced in this field.
- s. Loaded boreholes shall not be left unattended after the end of the shift.
- t. Suitable and sufficient means of egress to ground level shall be provided in all cases of excavations, trenches, all other places where explosives are handled above or below ground level.
- u. At an appropriate time before the final blasting warnings, workers in the area shall be removed to a designated safe place.
- v. An unmistakable, audible, final warning shall be sounded one minute prior to the detonation of explosives; after completion, when the person in charge has established that safe conditions prevail, an "all clear" shall be sounded.
- w. To prevent persons entering any danger zone during blasting operations notices shall be given to all concerned.
- x. Notices referred above shall indicate:
  - i. that explosives are in use;
  - ii. the audible warning sound and the "all clear" and state when they will be sounded; and
  - iii. the warning flags in use, including an "all clear" flag.
- y. Precautions against lightning shall be provided in accordance with the Indian Electricity Act and Indian Explosives Act and Rules and regulations framed there under.
- z. Package containing explosives shall not be dragged, dropped or handled roughly.
  - aa. Non-sparking tools shall be used to open keys.
  - bb. The explosives shall not be carried in the box or otherwise on any individual.
  - cc. Nothing shall be inserted in the open end of the blasting cap except fuses.

- dd. Deteriorated or damaged explosives shall not be used but shall be disposed or destroyed strictly in accordance with the approved methods and in the doing so the manufacturers or the appropriate authority's instructions shall be followed.
- ee. lightning shall be in accordance with Indian Electricity Act/Rules

## **10.2. TRANSPORTATION OF EXPLOSIVES**

- a. Keep safe distance and to use non-sparking tools while opening packages containing explosives;
- b. Stop the use of explosives and handling thereof while the weather conditions are not suitable for such use or handling;
- c. Due precautions shall be taken to prevent accidental discharge of electric blasting caps from current induced by induced voltage, lightning, adjacent power-lines, dust storms or other sources of extraneous electricity or otherwise. These precautions shall include –
  - i. Suspension of all blasting operations and evacuation of persons;
  - ii. All warning signs shall be displayed within 200 m of blasting operations and in case putting up a sign at 200 m is impractical, the contractor shall consult the Engineer-in-charge for alternatives;
  - iii. All loading and firing shall be directed and supervised by competent persons thoroughly experienced in the field;
  - iv. To prevent persons entering any danger zone during blasting operations, notices shall be given to all concerned;
- d. In addition to these provisions, all measures and precautions that are required to be observed for use, handling, storing or transportation of explosives under the Rules framed under the Explosives Act, 1884 (4 of 1884) shall be observed;
- e. All the relevant statutory provisions, local laws and rules and regulations shall be complied with.
- f. Where the magazine is located near the construction site and blasting operation continues daily, actual requirement of explosives shall be drawn from the magazine and transported to the site. Any leftovers shall be returned to the magazine each time after the blast. In case of work at scattered places and for a small duration, portable magazines shall be used and kept within a fence in safe place and properly guarded.
- g. For carrying higher quantity (more than 5 kg of explosives) specially designed insulated containers shall be used. These containers shall be constructed of finished wood not less than 5cm thick or plastic not less than 6mm thick or pressed fibre not less than 10mm thick. There shall be no metal parts (not even nails, bolts, screws etc.) and the containers shall be provided with suitable non-conductive carrying device, such as rubber, leather or canvas handle or strap.
- h. Vehicles to be used for transportation explosives shall be in good working condition and shall have a tight wooded or non-sparking metal (copper, brass and the like) floor with sides and

ends high enough to prevent the explosives from falling off the vehicle. In open bodied vehicles, the explosives shall be covered with a waterproof and fibre tarpaulin.

- i. Electrical wiring in vehicle shall be fully insulated so as to prevent the danger of short-circuiting and at least two fire extinguishers of carbon dioxide type shall be carried. The vehicle shall be properly marked indicating adequate warning to the public in regard to the nature of cargo.
- j. No metals except approved metal truck shall be allowed to come in contact with cases of explosives, metal, flammable, or corrosive substance shall not be transported with explosives. As far as possible, transportation of any material along with explosives shall be prohibited.
- k. Smoking shall be prohibited in the vehicle carrying explosives.
- l. No unauthorized person shall be allowed in the vehicle, carrying explosives.
- m. Loading and unloading of explosives shall be done carefully.
- n. Explosives and detonators or blasting caps shall not be permitted to be transported in the same vehicle.
- o. Detonators and other explosives for blasting shall be transported to the site of work in the original containers or in securely locked separate non-metallic containers and shall not be carried loose or mixed with other materials.

### **10.3. STORAGE OF EXPLOSIVES AND BLASTING AGENTS**

- a. Explosives and related materials shall be stored in approved facilities.
- b. Blasting caps, electric blasting caps, detonating primers, and primed cartridges shall not be stored in the same magazine with other explosives or blasting agents.
- c. Smoking and open flames shall not be permitted within 50 feet of explosives and detonators storage magazine.
- d. No Explosives or blasting agents shall be permanently stored in any underground area until the area has been developed to the point where at least two modes of exit have been provided.
- e. Permanent underground storage magazine shall be at least 300 feet from any shaft or other active underground working area.
- f. Permanent underground magazines containing detonators shall not be located closer than 50 feet to any magazine containing other explosives or blasting agents.

### **10.4. DRILLING AND LOADING**

- a. Before planning out the drilling operations for blasting purposes, nature of stratum and the overburden shall necessarily be examined to avoid possibilities of landslides after blasting.
- b. The face or rock shall be carefully examined before drilling to determine the presence of unfired explosives. No attempt shall be made to drill at a site if un-detonated explosives are suspected. In such case the boreholes shall be thoroughly cleaned before a cartridge is

inserted. Wooden tamping rods (not pointed, but cylindrical throughout) shall be used in the charging the holes. The cartridge will be on the top.

- c. The borehole shall be carefully checked for length, presence of water dust, etc. with a wooden tamping pole or a measuring tape before loading.
- d. Surplus explosives shall not be stacked near working areas during loading/unloading.
- e. The line of detonating fuse extending into a borehole shall be cut from the spool before loading the remainder of the charge.
- f. A bore shall not be loaded with explosives after springing (enlarging the hole with explosives) or upon completion of drilling without making sure it is cool and it does not contain any hot smoldering material. Temperatures in excess of 65° C are dangerous.
- g. A bore near another hole loaded with explosives shall not be sprung.
- h. No force shall be used for inserting cartridges or any explosives into a bore hold or pass any obstruction in a borehole.
- i. No force shall be used for inserting a blasting cap or an electric blasting cap into explosive. The cap shall be inserted into a hole made with a pickers designed for the purpose. A hitch of the electric blasting cap leading wire shall be made on the primer cartridge so as to prevent pulling out the electric blasting cap from the explosive charge. In case of fuse, the fuse shall be tied to the explosive cartridge so that the blasting cap is not pulled out. Care shall be taken so that the blasting cap is not pulled out. Care shall be taken so that the electric blasting cap, leading wire or the length of the fuse does not get damaged during loading of the charge.
- j. No attempt shall be made to slit, drop, deform or abuse the primer.
- k. Blasting caps or electric blasting caps shall not be connected to detonating fuse except by methods recommended by the manufacturers of caps.
- l. Explosive cartridge shall not be cut, nor explosive removed from the cartridge for use.
- m. Metallic devices of any kind shall not be used in tamping. Wooden tamping tools with not exposed metal parts except non-sparking metal connectors for jointed poled shall be used. Violent tamping shall be avoided. Primer shall not be tamped.
- n. Care shall be taken to confine the explosives in the bore hold with sand, earth clay or other suitable combustible stemming material.
- o. Kinking or injuring of fuse or electric blasting cap wires shall be avoided when tamping.

#### **10.5. ELECTRICAL SHOT-FIRING CIRCUIT**

- a. In deciding the sizes of wires, fuses, circuits, blasting switches, etc., instructions issued by the manufacturers of these articles shall be followed, if they do not contradict with Indian Explosives Act or framed under it.
- b. No person shall attempt to uncoil the wires and open out the short-circuited bare leading wires of the electric blasting cap during approach of dust storm or near any source of large

charge of static electricity or near a radio transmitter. The manufacturer of the cap or the Inspectorate of Explosives shall be consulted regarding the distance from the transmitter beyond which electric short firing shall be conducted.

- c. Firing circuit shall be kept completely insulated from the ground of the other conductors, such as wires, rails, pipes or other paths or stray current.
- d. There shall not be any electric live wires or cables of any kind near electric blasting caps or other explosives except at the time and for the purpose of firing the blast.
- e. All electric blasting caps shall be tested singly and also when connected in a circuit in series using only an approved type of circuit continuity tester or ohmmeter.
- f. No attempt shall be made to use in the same circuit either electrical blasting caps made by more than one manufacturer or electric blasting caps of different design or function even if made by the same manufacturers unless such use is approved by the manufacturers.
- g. No attempt shall be made to fire a circuit of electric blasting caps with less than the minimum current specified by the manufacturer of that electric blasting cap.
- h. Care shall be taken to ensure that all wire ends to be connected are bright and clean.
- i. The electric cap wires or leading wires shall be kept short circuited until ready to fire.
- j. When energy for blasting is taken from power circuits the voltage shall not exceed 220v. The wiring controlling arrangements shall conform to the following:
- k. The blasting switch shall be strictly according to the specifications, externally operated double-throw switch, which when locked in the open position will short circuit and ground the leading wires. The switch shall be installed at the location where the firing is to be controlled.
- l. A 'safety' switch of the same type as the blasting switch shall be installed between the blasting switch and the firing circuit and lead lines, at a distance not to exceed 180cm from the blasting switch.
- m. Both the safety switch and the blasting switch shall be locked in the open position immediately after the shot and before any person is permitted to return to the blasting area. Key to the switches shall remain in the possession of the blaster at all times.
- n. Rubber covered or other adequately insulated copper wires in good condition shall be used for firing lines and shall have solid cores of appropriate gauge. Sufficient firing line shall be provided to permit the blaster to be located at a safe distance from the blast. Single conductor lead lines shall be used.
- o. Blasting operations in the proximity of overhead power lines, communication lines, utility lines, or other structures shall not be carried on until the operator or the owner, or both of such lines as been notified and precautionary measures deemed necessary, have been taken.
- p. All holes loaded on a shift shall be fired on the same shift.
- q. As far as possible, blasting shall be carried out using suitable exploder with 25 per cent excess capacity. Electric power from the mains shall be used only when it is absolutely necessary.

#### **10.6. SHOT-FIRING WITH SAFETY FUSE**

- a. The fuse shall be carefully handled to avoid damaging the covering. In very cold weather the fuse shall be slightly warmed before using so as to avoid cracking the waterproofing.
- b. Short fuse shall not be used. The length of a fuse shall not be less than 120cm. The rate of burning of the fuse shall be known and it would be necessary to make sure that it will take sufficient time in burning so as to enable all persons to reach a place of safety. The burning rate of the fuse shall not be more than 60 cm/min.
- c. The fuse shall not be cut until the operation to insert the fuse into a blasting cap is ready. The fuse shall be cut off about 2.5 to 5 cm to ensure a dry end. It shall be cut squarely across with a clean and sharp blade. The fuse shall be seated lightly against the cap charge and care shall be taken to avoid twisting after it has been placed in position.
- d. Blasting caps shall not be crimped by any means except by a cap crimper designed for the purpose. It shall be necessary to make sure that the cap is squarely crimped to the face.
- e. The fuse shall be lighted with a fuse lighter designed for the purpose. If a match is used, the fuse shall be slit at the end and the match head held in then slit against the power core and then the match head rubbed against an abrasive surface to light the fuse.
- f. The fuse shall not be lighted until sufficient stemming has been placed over the explosives to prevent sparks of live match heads from coming into contact with the explosives.
- g. The explosives shall not be held in hands when lighting the fuse.

#### **10.7. UNDERGROUND WORK**

- a. Only permissible explosives and in the manner as specified by the appropriate authority shall be used.
- b. Excessive quantities of explosives shall not be taken underground at any time. Black blasting powder or pellet powder shall not be used with any other explosive in the same borehole.

#### **10.8. BEFORE AND AFTER FIRING**

- a. Before firing, sufficient warning shall be given to enable the people working in the area to get off the danger zone. The danger zone shall be suitable cordoned off and flag men posted at important points.
- b. No loose materials, such as tools, drilling implements etc. Shall be left on the rock surfaces to be blasted.
- c. Blasting in the open shall be carried out during the fixed hours every day or on fixed days in the week. This information shall be amply publicized and the following precautions observed:
- d. On the project sites, where blasting operations are carried out, daily blasting hours shall be clearly printed on the sign-boards on all the roads approaching that area.
  - i. Road closing barriers should be provided to close the traffic on these roads, at least 400 meters away when the firing is to take place.

- ii. The beginning of the firing shall follow loud sirens and similarly loud sirens shall succeed the completion of the firing.
- e. The shot-firer shall not be allowed to return to the blasting site after firing, until at least 5 min have elapsed. In case of electric shot firing, the shot holes shall be examined after firing and in case of misfire no person shall be allowed to approach the blasting site for at least 5 min. In case of shot firing with safety fuse, utmost care shall be taken to count the number to ensure that all the shots have fired and in the event of misfire, no person shall be allowed to approach the blasting site for at least 30 min. In any case, a careful inspection for the remaining un-detonated explosive shall be made after firing the shots. All misfired shot holes shall be cross-marked. No other person than those duly authorized shall approach the holes until one of the following operations has been performed in respect of each of the misfired holes:
- f. If the misfire is due to a faulty cable or faulty electrical connection the defect shall be remedied and the shot fired.
- g. The stemming shall be floated out by use of water or air jet from hose until the hole has been opened to within 60 cm of the charge, whereupon water will be siphoned or pumped out, then a fresh new charge placed and duly detonated. Or
  - i. A careful search shall be made of unexploded material in the debris of the charge.
  - ii. If a shift charge is unavoidable, the person in-charge of one shift before leaving the work shall inform the person relieving him for the next shift of any cases misfired and shall point out their position duly cross marked and also state clearly what action has to be taken in the matter.

Note: The rules are made considering statutory provisions and other National/International standards. However, if any statutory provision overruling these laws is made, the statutory provisions shall overrule the NTPC Rules.