

20 December 2000



The Manager
All Underground Coal Mines

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**SUBJECT: SECTION 63 COAL MINES REGULATION ACT 1982 No. 67
NOTICE. CONTROL OF THE IN-SITU APPLICATION OF POLYMERIC
CHEMICALS IN UNDERGROUND COAL MINES**

It has come to my attention that trials of polymeric chemical products are being organised in NSW coal mines without following the previously notified procedure and without consultation with relevant stake-holders.

The change to the Coal Mining Regulations on 1 September 1999 has resulted in no change to the stake-holder agreed procedure required to undertake such trials.

A procedure for the controlled use of polymeric chemical products was in place prior to the introduction of the new regulation and continues to have effect. The procedure applies to polymeric chemical products proposed for use in surface spraying applications, injection under pressure into strata or as cavity fillers.

Polymeric chemical products are subject to such control due to the potential and actual problems that arise from the chemical properties and processes of application. In the past fires and fatalities have occurred. Polymeric chemical products were banned due to the hazards created by their use. Polymeric chemical products were re-introduced to the underground coal industry through a stake-holder agreed procedure of product characterisation testing and application process control.

You are hereby notified that trials and operational use will only be able to proceed subject to the existing agreed procedure being undertaken. The procedure as previously notified follows;-

1. the applicant must establish protocols and procedures including MSDS and must establish an auditable management system;
2. product characterisation tests to be conducted at the DMR Mine Safety Laboratory;
3. the applicant must have a risk assessment conducted in accordance with MDG1010, using a panel acceptable to the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines. This panel need not necessarily involve DMR staff;
4. the risk assessment must be evaluated in accordance with MDG 1014, by a person nominated by the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines;
5. limited underground trials may take place with District Inspector of Coal Mine's and District Check Inspector's knowledge;

6. the applicant may then make application to the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines and submit outcomes from the above processes together with overseas test reports from recognised authorities and other pertinent information as a means of demonstrating that the product is fit for purpose and enhances safety in underground coal mines.

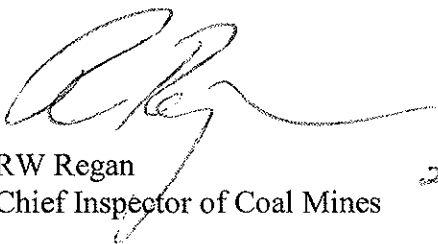
Accordingly, no polymeric products are to be used or installed in, or taken into an underground coal mine other than in accordance with the previously determined and above mentioned procedure.

Under the Coal Mines (General) Regulation 1999, Part 8 Approval of Items, provision has been made for the Chief Inspector to have discretionary powers to approve a type of item and require any equipment, apparatus, material or thing to be of an approved type before it may be used or installed in, or taken into a mine.

The intention of this regulatory change was to enable control of items and classes of items used in or proposed to be used in mines, where it was determined that such control was required.

It is proposed that polymeric chemical products will be required to comply with standard product characterisation tests before use in underground coal mines is considered. Further, it is proposed that the stake-holder agreed "Guideline for the In-situ Application of Polymeric Chemicals in Underground Coal Mines" be conditions imposed in relation to polymeric chemical products.

Yours faithfully,



RW Regan
Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

20.12.2000

cc DMR Area Managers, North East and South East
District Check Inspectors, Northern, Southern and Western Districts