

MINE SAFETY NEWS

Department of Mineral Resources

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September - November 1999

NEWS

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

"There have been two big items of news over the past few weeks. The first was the introduction of this Government's simplified coal mine safety regulations on 1 September, from 35 regulations down to four.

These new regulations put mine safety where it belongs - in the hands of mine owners, managers, unions and workers.

The two key features of the regulations are:

- *to develop a more systematic approach to mine safety to complement the introduction of Mine Safety Management Plans;*
- *to make very clear the 'duty of care' at a mine site. By this I mean, the mine owner's responsibility to ensure that everything possible has been done to protect miners' safety and to ensure that each worker is motivated to make safety their top priority.*

The new regulations are a precursor to the forthcoming overhaul of the current Coal Mines Regulations Act. This will see wide consultation within the industry, with Mine Safety News giving regular updates on progress.

The second item was my calling of a special meeting of the Mine Safety Council to discuss concerns over mining accidents in the Hunter region.

The meeting was highly constructive, and produced the following outcomes:

- *the establishment of an industry working party to look at the design, use, training in, and maintenance of mining equipment;*
- *an immediate audit of all coal mines by the Coal Mines Inspectorate for energy isolation and maintenance procedures;*
- *a feasibility study by the DMR and Joint Coal Board into the establishing of a training mine;*
- *DMR to investigate the use of the Internet to provide better information on safety to the industry.*

Finally, in the interests of safety, I urge everyone in the industry to ensure that their mine site equipment is ready for the Year 2000."



The Minister for Mineral Resources and Fisheries, The Hon Edward Obeid.

NEW COAL MINE REGULATIONS

The regulations to the Coal Mines Regulation Act 1982 were repealed on 31 August 1999.

The former 35 regulations have been reduced to the Coal Mines (General) Regulation 1999, the Coal Mines (Underground) Regulation 1999 and the Coal Mines (Open Cut) Regulation 1999.

A fourth regulation, the Coal Mines (Investigation) Regulation Act 1999, has also been created to provide support to recent changes to the Act, relating to investigations and inspections.

Objectives

The Department has undertaken significant work to develop replacement regulations. The reason for this is:

- ✓ to consolidate the subject matter of former regulations
- ✓ to remove redundant provisions and to shift certain requirements from regulation, to codes or guidelines
- ✓ to reduce the regulatory burden on the open cut coal mining sector
- ✓ to implement measures arising from the findings and recommendations of the Moura Inquiry in Queensland and from the investigation into the explosion at Endeavour colliery in this State in June 1995
- ✓ to introduce systems oriented approaches to safety management that will support the ultimate full scale introduction of Mine Safety Management Plans
- ✓ to implement recommendations from the Gretley Inquiry, especially concerning inrushes

What's in the new regulations.

The new regulations began operating on 1 September 1999. The General Regulation applies to all underground and open cut coal mines and to coal preparation plants that are managed separately from mines.

The General Regulation deals with :

- ✓ the general duties of managers, owners, employees and others
- ✓ health and safety codes, standards or guidelines
- ✓ appointment and duties of mining officials
- ✓ communication of information to employees ▶

Millennium Bug
NEWS
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- ✓ qualifications for the appointment of inspectors, mine engineers and mine surveyors
- ✓ election of the various check inspectors
- ✓ surveying mines and the preparation of plans of mines
- ✓ approval of Items
- ✓ first aid systems and general welfare
- ✓ additional provisions in respect of declared plants
- ✓ miscellaneous matters.

The Underground Regulation provides for:

- development and implementation by mine managers of management structures. This includes: the control of persons underground at mines, the duties of mining officials and other general matters
- development & implementation of inspection systems
- a mine inspection system is to: detect hazards, categorise the mine into production districts, assign deputies to those districts and specify the types and frequency of inspections to be carried out
- specification of dangerous occurrences
- communication of information to officials & employees
- working dimensions and breakaway rules
- prevention of inrush
- provision of support and operation of transport in mines
- ventilation
- underground emergency systems
- fire control (including the appointment of fire officers and the establishment of fire brigades and fire stations)
- prohibition of smoking materials
- use and storage of flammable materials underground
- provision of gas monitoring & detecting equipment and systems
- use of electrical equipment
- use of explosives and shotfiring
- control of airborne dust
- explosion prevention and suppression through the control of flammable dust
- sinking shafts
- use of belt conveyor systems.

The Open Cut Regulation deals with:

- ✓ development & implementation of inspection systems
- ✓ functions and duties of examiners
- ✓ making of examinations and reports by mining officials
- ✓ notifiable incidents, transport rules, mobile equipment and repairs to electrical cables
- ✓ use of explosives and shotfiring
- ✓ the control of airborne dust.

The Coal Mines (Investigation) Regulation

The Investigation Regulation supports initiatives taken by the Department for the administration of safety in coal mines through the Mines Legislation Amendment (Mines Safety) Act 1998. This has recently begun operation.

The regulation aims to create an atmosphere of mutual trust between all parties involved in coal mine safety. It will encourage the involvement of all parties in safety matters.

This climate of safety will be achieved by detailing clear procedures in the investigations of accidents and dangerous occurrences. It will also create a clear structure for the undertaking of investigations.

The regulation prescribes provisions to:

- require inspectors and others to produce certificates of authority in certain circumstances
- specify the form of words to be used by inspectors and others, when exercising certain powers under the Act
- detail certain accidents and dangerous occurrences in mines that must be reported to the Director-General of the Department of Mineral Resources
- specify certain functions of inspectors and others in respect of accidents or dangerous occurrences in mines
- require that the terms of reference of a Board of Inquiry into: an accident, dangerous occurrence, practice or matter in a mine, be publicly available
- specify matters associated with potential appointees to Boards of Inquiry. ■■■■



LETTER REGARDING MILLENNIUM BUG



Graham Terrey, Director of Mine Safety and Environment, Department of Mineral Resources.

25 August 1999

The Manager
All NSW Mines

Dear Manager

Re: Millennium Bug (Y2K)

There has been a great deal of publicity about the Millennium Bug or Y2K problem, and there is a great deal of information freely available on how to implement a Y2K strategy. The DMR issued a safety alert on this matter in September 1998. The safety alert stated:

“... it would be expected that each Mining operation would be able to demonstrate as a minimum that a plan of corrective action is in place by 1 November 1998 and that all corrective action required will be completed within 6 months of that date...” i.e., by 1 May 1999.

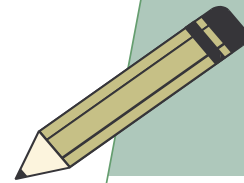
A recent survey has shown that the mining industry is the least prepared of any industry group in Australia to deal with the Millennium Bug.

If corrective action at your mine sites is unlikely to be completed before the remaining critical Y2K dates (31/12/1999, 29/2/2000), it is imperative that urgent action be undertaken with a renewed focus on contingency planning.

I remind you of your “duty of care”, as mine employers and users of large powerful equipment, to provide a safe workplace. It is your responsibility to ensure that the health and safety of mine workers is not adversely affected by any Y2K issue at your operation.

Should the Department become aware of any specific Y2K issues that may lead to injury or death of mine workers, we will not hesitate to implement our enforcement policy.

Graham Terrey,
Director of Mine Safety and Environment.



ARE YOU Y2K SAFE? YOU SHOULD BE.

The year 2000 is almost here, and the NSW mining industry has only weeks to ensure that all mine site equipment is Y2K compliant.

Given that about 80% of the industry is computer based, it is clear that any failure in planning for the click over to 2000 could have serious repercussions for health and safety.

The so-called ‘millennium bug’ may affect all software in equipment that contains systems in which the year is determined by two digits only, ie when the computer clicks over to 2000, it will be read as 00.

What happens next, depends on the design of the software - but the emphasis is to check that health and safety are not at risk from malfunctions in both systems and equipment.

Mine staff need to reassure themselves that their equipment is Y2K compliant, and that they have contingency plans to cover any failures or disruption caused by outside services.

Have you and your safety committee:

- ensured that all new equipment - not just computers - will continue to perform after 1 January?
- sought assurances from suppliers that their products are Y2K compliant?

- incorporated a compliance warranty in every purchase or lease agreement?
- undertaken a compliance program?

Mining companies, which have already dealt with Y2K issues, are a good source of information and solutions to problems. It may also be possible for mines to resolve mutual Y2K problems together.

The government has ensured all its new information systems have been warranted as Y2K compliant.

Contingency and recovery plans have been developed. ■■■■

AMENDMENTS TO MINE SAFETY LAWS

The Government has improved laws covering State's mines and quarries and a number of legislative initiatives have formally begun. Changes to the Mines Inspection Act 1901 and Coal Mines Regulation Act 1982 began on 30 July 1999.

This is another step in the Government's program to ensure the highest standards of occupational health and safety in the mining industry.

CHANGES CONTAINED IN THE MINES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MINES SAFETY) ACT 1998

The Government has carried out an extensive review, flowing from the recommendations of the Mine Safety Review and the Gretley Inquiry.

Main impacts are:

- ✓ creation of Investigators who have a specialist role separate from inspectors
- ✓ the development of an independent Unit which investigates fatal accidents. This will prevent conflict which may arise from an Inspector investigating matters in which they have had a previous role
- ✓ establishing the position of Mine Safety Officers who will have expertise in spontaneous combustion, ventilation or auditing mine safety plans. They also have investigative powers
- ✓ creation of alternate inquiry provisions for investigation of more serious incidents or safety and health issues in mines. This includes provision for a Board of Inquiry to conduct special investigations.

Other effects will:

- allow for a court conducting future inquiries to sit with technical assessors
- provide better protection for witnesses assisting an inquiry
- provide consistent powers for investigators in both the coal and non-coal sectors



Chris Ellicott, Manager, Regulatory Development, Department of Mineral Resources.

- improve public availability of Inspectors reports by requiring Inspectors to make formal reports to the Director General, which will be available for release
- remove ambiguities which have led people to believe that they have 24 hours in which to answer questions put to them by Inspectors. People will now be required to answer questions while events are still clear in their minds;
- extend the investigative powers of Inspectors beyond mine sites, to include such things as equipment manufacturing and/or maintenance facilities
- improve the safety of old mine shafts in accordance with the observations of the Gretley Inquiry.
- ✓ the requirement for a qualified production manager to oversee production operations
- ✓ managers of all non-coal mines will be obliged to identify hazards and put appropriate risk management procedures in place

The amendments also repeal several obsolete provisions in current legislation. These include: a provision prohibiting the payment of miners' wages on licensed premises, a provision relating to steam powered machinery and provisions regarding drainage.

Other effects

- coverage of exploration sites where only one person is employed
- information and statistics dealing with accidents, dangerous incidents and industrial diseases
- strengthening the requirements to keep and maintain accurate plans of mine workings
- ground rules for the formation of risk management programs
- provision for effective communications systems throughout a mine
- a system to account for persons underground, including their probable location underground
- safe handling, storage and disposal of wastes
- preparation of integrated emergency response plans. ■■■■

MINES INSPECTION AMENDMENT ACT 1998

The amendments included in the Mines Inspection Amendment Act 1998, bring the Mines Inspection Act and General Rule into line with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. They cover all non-coal mines, quarries and processing plants associated with quarries, such as ready mix concrete and asphalt plants. Coal mines already conform to this ILO convention.

Main impacts are:

- ✓ the creation of the statutory role for General Managers who have responsibility for safety in all parts of the mine



JOINT COAL BOARD DRUG AND ALCOHOL COMMITTEE

For some time, the Joint Coal Board (JCB) has been concerned about the information available regarding the level of drug and alcohol use in the NSW coal industry. As a result, in May 1999, the JCB established the Joint Coal Board Drug and Alcohol Committee. All major stakeholders are represented. The NSW Department of Mineral Resources, the NSW Minerals Council, the CFMEU and the Joint Coal Board, all have permanent representation.

Recently, the JCB has begun several initiatives to assist industry overcome the problems of drug and alcohol use on mine sites.

One of these, is an awareness raising education campaign, which was developed following consultation with mine workers and officials.

It uses workplace and culture and strong visual images to reinforce the physical and human effects of substance abuse. The campaign provides freely distributed posters.

Once awareness has been raised throughout the community, the next phase will provide more detailed information.

The committee expects to operate initially for about two years. During this period the committee aims to have mine workers and proprietors, implement strategies and structures to manage the issues at mine site level.

Several mines have engaged the JCB to conduct random drug and alcohol testing. This is a visible and highly successful strategy for coal mines wishing to deter workers from coming to work under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.

Evidence from these tests will reveal the level of substance abuse currently in the industry. The JCB expects to see the level fall in response to the industry's willingness to confront the problem with initiatives such as the Joint Coal Board Drug and Alcohol Committee.

Ian Farrar, Chairman of the JCB, chairs the Joint Coal Board Drug and Alcohol committee. Mine workers are represented by Ron Land,

who as well as being CFMEU appointee, is a member of the JCB and CoalSuper.

Robert Oliver, the NSW Minerals Council's occupational health and safety expert, represents coal proprietors and Terry Abbott represents the Department of Mineral Resources, which is the mining safety regulator for NSW.

Technical and medical input is provided by Dr Bill Pollock, Chief Medical Officer of the JCB.

This wide ranging representation on the committee is an indication of the mature approach to the problem being adopted by the industry.

The CFMEU has a long history of attempting to change the behaviour of workers when it comes to working under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This responsible attitude has enabled the issue to be brought to the top of the list for occupational health and safety professionals.

Similarly, coal miners have played a large part in the implementation of drug and alcohol policies on individual mine sites. ■■■



Strong visual effects are used in the Joint Coal Board Awareness Raising Campaign.

MINE SAFETY INVESTIGATION UNIT APPOINTED

The new Department of Mineral Resources Investigation Unit is now operating.

It was formed following a recommendation by the Mine Safety Review. It was decided that a discrete accident and analysis unit be formed within the Department to set new standards, conduct investigations into selected matters, train other Department staff, conduct legal proceedings where appropriate, and disseminate information to industry.

All fatalities and 'prescribed matters' such as gas and dust explosions and water inrushes, will be investigated by the Unit. Other incidents considered significant can also be investigated.

The objective of the new Unit is to improve safety by maximising the impacts and benefits of investigations by identifying deficiencies in safety systems and analysing contributing factors to accidents.

Reporting directly to the Director General, the Unit is autonomous. The Unit is able to conduct investigations without conflict of interest or influence by the Department.

It is staffed by a manager and four specialist officers, who have been chosen for their expertise in mine safety and investigation.



Stede Coundouris, Manager, Investigation Unit, Department of Mineral Resources.

Stede Coundouris

Stede Coundouris has been appointed Manager of the Unit. He is a graduate mining engineer from the School of Mining Engineering at the University of New South Wales with wide experience as an engineer and an Inspector. In the Metalliferous and Extractive Industry sector.



The Mine Safety Investigation Unit update their management systems.

His experience includes underground and surface mining, explosives, research, investigations and management. He is the holder of a Mine Manager's Certificate of Competency, Shotfirer's Certificate of Competency and the Powderman's Certificate of Competency.

Stede has been with the Department for over 15 years and is a Senior Inspector. He will manage the activities of the Investigation Unit and will be directly involved in its activities.

Paul Hamson

Paul Hamson was appointed to the position of Investigator (Mining/Legal) on January 11, 1999. A former NSW Police Officer, he entered the coal mining industry in 1982 and has worked at a number of underground mines.

He was recruited from Ulan Underground Mine where he was working as Shift Undermanager. Paul holds an Undermanager's Certificate of Competency, Associate Diploma in Engineering, Diploma in Law and is

currently completing a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice. Paul has a sound knowledge of mining legislation and the underground coal mining industry.

Murray Johnstone

Murray Johnstone was appointed to the position of Investigator (Investigations) on May 31, 1999. He is a former accredited Detective with over 10 years experience in the NSW Police Service. His experience includes the conduct of investigations, interviewing, scene analysis, preparation of briefs for Criminal and Coroner's Courts and court room procedures.

Murray is an accredited investigations trainer and he has conducted courses in his former employment on investigation methodology, and management together with interviewing skills. He has completed a Bachelor of Policing (Investigations) and an Associate Diploma in Criminal Justice majoring in Psychology. ▶



The Investigation Unit from left to right: Garth Sheeby, Paul Hamson, Peter Doyle and Murray Johnstone.



Garth Sheehy

Garth Sheehy was appointed to the position of Investigator (Legal/Analyst) on July 19, 1999. He has been employed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions where he was engaged in preparing briefs of evidence, examining statements, conducting forensic investigations and instructing Crown Prosecutors in criminal matters before the District Court.

He was an analyst in Forensic Toxicology with the Department of Health providing forensic evidence for Coronial Inquests and Supreme Court Trials. Garth has appeared as an expert witness and has had considerable experience in the investigation of unusual deaths.

Garth has worked on a consultancy contract for the Public Affairs Branch of the Australian

Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation presenting talks and taking members of the public into the HIFAR nuclear reactor.

Before joining the Investigation Unit, Garth was employed as a Forensic Scientist with the Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research where he performed analytical work exclusively for the Police Service and Crime Agencies. He is the holder of a Degree in Law, a Degree in Science and a Powderman's Certificate of Competency.

Peter Doyle

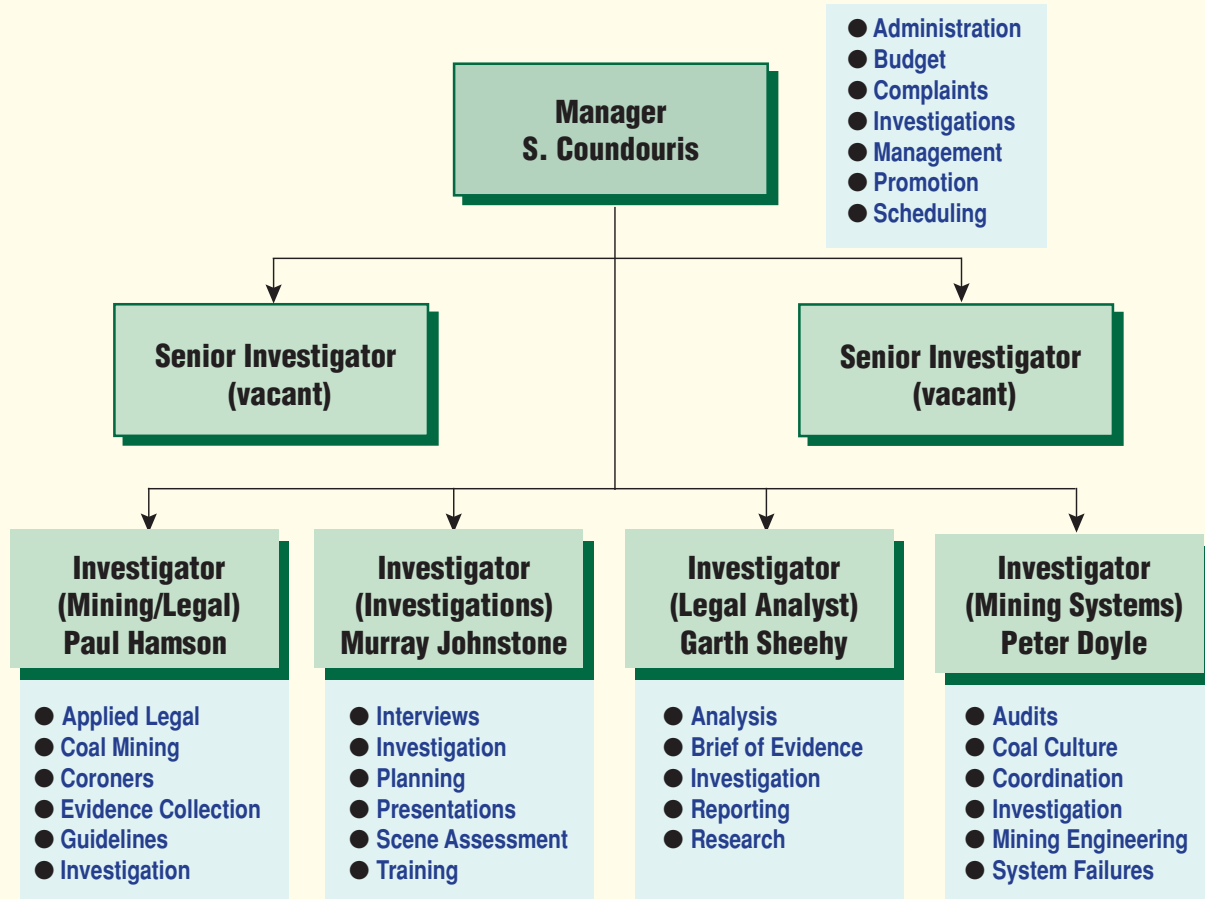
Peter Doyle was appointed to the position of Investigator (Mining Systems) on August 2, 1999. He has had 14 years experience in underground coal mines in positions ranging from mineworker to mine manager. His most

recent position was as Technical Services Manager and Deputy Mine Manager of Powercoal's Angus Place Colliery.

Peter has been involved in mine planning, budgeting, preparation of statutory applications, environmental management, coal mining engineering and the failure of systems. He is mines rescue trained and has been involved in mines rescue competitions.

He is a graduate of the University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Science, major in Computer Science, plus a Bachelor of Engineering Hons in Mining Engineering. He is completing post graduate studies at the University of NSW. Peter holds an Undermanager's and a Coal Mine Manager's Certificate of Competency. ■■■■

**REVISED STRUCTURE OF INVESTIGATION UNIT
July, 1999**



MINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The NSW Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) has prepared new guidelines for mine safety management. The department will adopt a consultative role to help the Coal mining industry move towards implementing full scale Mine Safety Management Systems (MSMS).

The Guidelines were outlined at the NSW Mining & Quarrying Industry seminar held in Wollongong from 14 to 16 May and the Occupational Health & Safety Conference held in Terrigal from August 8 to 10.

Miners throughout NSW will gain significant health and safety benefits, when the industry adopts a systems approach to mine safety management, as required by new Regulations to the Coal Mines Regulation Act. The new regulations are effective from 1 September 1999.

Recognising that it will take a lot of work to build the first phase of MSMS, the NSW DMR has extended the deadline up to 1 March 2000, for mining companies to meet new Regulatory requirements. The amount of effort required will vary according to the nature of the mine site.

To frame the new regulations, the Government took into account past failures in safety management along with the recommendations from the Moura and Gretley Inquiries and the Endeavour Colliery investigation.

The Department's Guidelines for the Development and Verification of a Mine Safety Management Systems (MSMS) and Hazard Management Plans (HMP), are intended as a template to help mine managers meet OH&S requirements. These guidelines include MUST HAVE elements and other quality elements.



Paul Jeans, Chairman, Safety and Health Committee, Minerals Council of Australia, speaks on achieving the vision of zero fatalities and injuries at the 1999 Occupational Health and Safety conference at Terrigal.



From left to right at the 1999 Occupational Health and Safety conference at Terrigal: Alan Coultis, Director General of the Department of Mineral Resources, author and academic Andrew Hopkins, Professor Dennis Else, Chairman, National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, Paul Jeans, Chairman Safety and Health Committee, Minerals Council of Australia and Bob Humpbris, Managing Director, Peabody Resources.

"Whatever you do, don't go to the mine next door, get its plan, change the names and think it will work," said Les Gardner, District Inspector of Coal Mines for Wollongong, speaking at the 1999 NSW Mining & Quarrying Industry seminar and the 1999 Occupational Health & Safety Conference held in Terrigal.

"Remember, the guidelines are only a model, not a definitive document. What I'm talking about is a template that will allow you, as operators, to aid in the development of Safety Management Plans."

"The key MUST HAVE elements of a Mine Safety Management System (MSMS), are an Overview Document and Hazard Management Plan, for core hazards and mine site specific hazards.

"Later, mine site operators may also include a Base Health and Safety Program. This program will capture low level hazards such as slips and trips, manual handling of accidents, plus mine site Training Scheme.

"The MSMS must derive from a risk assessment process which identifies the mine site specific hazards and DMR prescribed core hazards, with the exception of those demonstrated as having no application to the operation.

"The Overview Document should be developed from risk management principles, contain the company's OH&S policy and be signed by the most senior person at the mine to demonstrate commitment from the top," added Les Gardner.

The Overview Document relates to a specific mine and includes:

- a Mine Safety Policy Statement
- a description of format and components
- a description of the mine's location, the seam(s) characteristics, means

of access and egress, mining methods and associated operations

- the examination process by which the Mine Site Hazards were identified and associated risks were assessed
- the time and event basis for Review of Mine Site Hazards and associated Risk levels
- the means by which each of the Mine Site Hazards will be separately assessed and addressed for Associated Dangers
- the Mine organisation and responsibilities for development of the MSMS and each of its components.

Hazard Management Plans:

The bulk of documentation to build a MSMS, requires Hazard Management Plans (HMP) for 10 core hazards.

The ten core hazards are as follows:

- General Regulation, Clause 21 - Fire Control and Emergency
- General Regulation, Clause 74 - First Aid
- Open Cut Regulation, Clause 6- Inspection
- Open Cut Regulation, Clause 24 - Shotfiring and Explosives



Julie Armour of Working Armour, speaks on assessing risks in critical tasks at the 1999 Occupational Health and Safety conference at Terrigal.



Alan Coultis, Director General, Department of Mineral Resources opening the 1999 Occupational Health and Safety conference at Terrigal.

- Underground Regulation, Clause 16 - Inspection
- Underground Regulation, Clause 154 - Shotfiring and Explosives
- Underground Regulation, Clause 71 - Ventilation Control
- Underground Regulation, Clause 102 - Underground Emergency
- Underground Regulation, Clause 40 - Inrush Prevention
- Underground Regulation, Clause 172 - Explosion Suppression

Key elements of the MSMS are; a list of documentation, and processes of: audits, reviews, employee representation/consultation and training requirements for each HMP.

Only the Inrush Prevention System specifically requires that a risk assessment be conducted as part of its development, although the need for a risk assessment can be conducted when developing the HMP. This can be inferred from the General Regulation Clause 7. The

Fire and Emergency HMP requires consultation with Emergency Services.

The detail expected in the prescribed elements of a HMP include; identified associated dangers, control procedures (for identified hazards or associated dangers), training requirements relating to core hazards, audit and review processes and schedules, communications and associated documentation and references.

The communications aspects of MSMS require mines to operate a number of forums and channels of communications to allow any issues relating to the HMP to be discussed and addressed. These would include planning and safety meetings, with the frequency and required attendees listed, as part of the plan.

Some delegates to the 1999 Occupational Health & Safety Conference expressed concern about what they perceived as a level of prescription in the MSMS guidelines document. Delegates were also concerned about their organisation being held accountable if the systems implemented did not match the guidelines.

Addressing these concerns, Les Gardner commented, "The guidelines are essentially non prescriptive - remember this is for best practice, we're talking about a model that you can use.

"To put it into perspective, the only thing that is defined for Outburst Hazard Management Plans are the levels of gas that allow mining to occur. It is up to the mine management to work out how to do this."

Terry Abbott, Area Manager Safety, Wollongong, echoed Les Gardner's qualifications on the level of prescription in the new guidelines.

"We've got to be open minded. We want to be adaptable. We don't want you to rewrite

everything you have already done, but you may need to incorporate some extra things. As long as you specify and explain how the regulations are addressed you can build your own system," Terry Abbott said.

According to Les Gardner, with the new Regulations the role of an inspector will ultimately change from less of a hazard hunter to more of an auditor of the hazard management plans contained within mine sites - Mine Safety Management Systems. ■■■■

WORKSHOPS FOR NEW REGULATIONS

Four industry focus group meetings were conducted as part of the education program for the new regulations.

The focus group meetings were designed to establish needs, attitudes and concerns relating to the new provisions. These meetings were attended by mine managers, undermanagers, examiners, deputies and check inspectors from the open cut and underground sectors.

Following these, a focus group meeting of Departmental inspectors was conducted. The outcomes of the industry meetings were presented to the NSW Minerals Council Coal Committee and the CFMEU.

As a result of the focus group meetings it was decided to conduct a series of workshops for the industry and the Department. These were held as follows:

Wednesday 21 July - Thursday 22 July 1999

Meeting of Coal Mining Inspectors and Departmental managers at the Central Coast Leagues Club.

Wednesday 28 July 1999

Meeting of the industry (mine managers and CEOs) at the Penrith Panthers Leagues Club.

Tuesday 17 August 1999

Industry Seminar (mine supervisors and workplace representatives for the south/west region) at the Penrith Leagues Club.

Wednesday 18 August 1999

Industry Seminar (mine supervisors and workplace representatives for the Northern/Hunter region) at the Country Comfort Monte Pio, Rutherford.

These seminars were well attended and will be a feature for the development of the new Coal Mines Regulation Act. ■■■■



Engineering students from the University of New South Wales who attended the 1999 Occupational Health and Safety conference at Terrigal.

SAFETY ON THE WEB

You can now access all the latest information on mine safety direct onto your PC screen by net - surfing to:

www.minerals.nsw.gov.au/safety

The Department of Mineral Resources web site was created in 1996 and redesigned into its current form about two years ago. Today, it has over 500 informative pages and is updated on a daily basis.

This site carries:

- Department of Mineral Resources Safety Alerts
- enforcement of Health and Safety in Mines
- the new Coal Mine Regulations
- the Department's policy statement on the enforcement of health and safety standards applying to mining safety.

Also available on the site are:

- a list of all safety publications issued by the department
- back issues of Mine Safety News
- back issues on Mine Safety Review Newsletter
- editions of Mine Safety Alerts
- Open Cut and Underground mine regulations
- information about Above and Below Ground mines Production and Managers' certificate of competency
- the Gretley Inquiry and summary of recommendation
- a link to MSHA Internet site of the Mines Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) of the United States Department of Labour

Some areas require you to have ADOBE ACROBAT but there is a down loading link for this software on the Department's home site, which is www.minerals.nsw.gov.au.

From the home site you can access other information about the Department, such as:

- exploration maps and publications
- all publications produced by the Department of Mineral Resources
- Mechanical and Mining Design Guidelines with order forms
- commodities produced in NSW

- investment briefing and mineral site projects
- infrastructure and cost advantage
- mineral processing
- Minfinder databases for NSW
- titles with map, lists, licenses and how to apply for current titles
- the environment
- key contacts within the Department and an internal phone directory
- up to date news in 'what's new' for Mining in NSW
- mining royalties with a list of royalties
- statistics
- Departmental branches and programs
- Departmental Library brief on contents ■■■■

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Mr Robert Regan, New Chief Inspector of Coal Mines and new Assistant Director, Safety Operations, with the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR).

Minister for Mineral Resources, Eddie Obeid, announced on September 24, the appointment of Mr Robert Regan as Chief Inspector of Coal Mines. At the same time, Mr Regan also takes up the position of Assistant Director, Safety Operations, with the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR).



Robert Regan Chief Inspector of Coal Mines, Department of Mineral Resources.

"Mr Regan is a key appointment in the restructured Mine Safety and Environment Division of the DMR" said Mr Obeid. "He will provide the strategic direction for managing safety in NSW coal and mineral mining

operations. His main focus is to lead the mine safety reform agenda, and to achieve the right balance between Government and industry responsibility for managing safety" said Mr Obeid.

Mr Regan, aged 46, has broad experience at senior levels in the industry in both NSW and Queensland. He was mine manager of the BHP Mitsui Moura Mine, and had a long and distinguished career with BHP in both its coal and steel divisions.

In the 1980s Mr Regan was Mine Manager of the Illawarra and Newcastle Collieries, and was involved in the development of the Appin gas project.



Paul Healey, Area Manager, Hunter.

Mr Paul Healey, Area Manager for Hunter.

Paul Healey joined the Department of Mineral Resources as Area Manager, Hunter. Due to staff movements, he was seconded to Sydney to help facilitate the transition to the new Regulations and undertake the functions of the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines.

Priorities in the Area Manager position are to ensure that the transition to the new Regulations is adequately communicated. In addition, Paul is ensuring that the systems to control mine hazards are developed and the changing roles, technologies and structure are understood to generate positive outcomes.

Paul began his career as a trainee mining engineer with Elcom Collieries. After obtaining Statutory Certificates, he worked as manager of opencut and underground coal mines in the Newcastle, Singleton-North West and Western districts. His most recent position was Planning and Engineering Manager at Ulan Coal Mines. ■■■■



EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF MINE SAFETY COUNCIL

An extraordinary meeting of the Mine Safety Council was held at Cardiff on September 1 to address the number of accidents in NSW Coal Mines.

Council members discussed strategies for improving safety on mine sites. The meeting reached agreement on a plan for cooperative projects on an industry wide basis.

Eddie Obeid, Minister for Mineral Resources, reaffirmed the Government's priority for the highest standards of mine safety and stated that a coordinated effort is required to find out why accidents are happening. He said regulations and guidelines can only reduce accidents when the ownership of safety is shared with mine owners, managers, unions and workers.

Professor Dennis Else, Chairman of the Mine Safety Council, said that what is required is a deep understanding of causation of major hazards and their control. He pointed out that focussed interventions over the last 10 years had significantly reduced strata initiated fatalities and outbursts.

Bob Humphris representing the Minerals Council, and Ron Land, representing the CFMEU, both expressed their support for cooperation between union, government and the mines to find new ways to make the mining industry safer.

John Maitland, National Secretary of the CFMEU, referred to the recent report on the Safety Culture Survey produced by the Minerals Council of Australia, highlighting problems with workers under stress from fear of unemployment. He believed this resulted in them not being able to deal effectively with safety issues. He stressed the need for on going training together with the maintenance of competencies.

Matters relating to safety discussed and agreed for follow-up included:

- Roof bolting and the design and use of isolation procedures for coal mining machinery
- Information transfer using technology to better advantage
- Auditing of mine site isolation procedures by the DMR

- A study into the feasibility of setting up part of an existing or abandoned mine as a training venue
- The need for Task Group 1 to re-examine the "exclusion zone" for remote control equipment
- The Department will present a paper to the next Mine Safety Council meeting on the 4 November 1999, regarding the ongoing development of competencies for certificated personnel. ■■■

SAFETY ALERTS: JUNE 1999 - SEPTEMBER 1999

Report No	Date	Title
SA99-12	7 July 1999	Fatality - continuous miner crushing injury
SA99-13	16 July 1999	Vehicle brake failure
SA99-14	4 August 1999	Fatality resulting from drowning
SA99-15	6 August 1999	Pugmill tips over in quarry
SA99-16	3 September 1999	Continuous miner drill rig crushes tradesman

Safety Alerts are issued by the Department of Mineral Resources so that the industry can take steps to prevent further occurrences of particular incidents. To obtain a copy of any of the Safety Alerts listed above, or to be added to the mailing list to receive further Safety Alerts, contact Steve Stewart on (02) 9901 8413, fax (02) 9901 8584, or e-mail stewarts@minerals.nsw.gov.au. To download your own copy free from the Internet, go to www.minerals.nsw.gov.au/safety. ■■■

SAFETY PUBLICATIONS - Draft Guidelines To Support 1999 CMRA Regulations

MDG 1011	Single Entry Drivage in Underground Coal Mines
MDG 1012	Use of Explosives in Underground Coal Mines
MDG 1019	Use of Cutting & Welding Equipment in Underground Coal Mines
MDG 1020	Escape from Underground Coal Mines
MDG 1021	Use of Auxiliary Fans in Underground Coal Mines
MDG 1022	Underground Emergency Preparedness Management Plan
MDG 1023	Ventilation Control System Guideline
MDG 1024	Inrush Hazard Management Guidance Material
MDG 1025	Use of Explosives in Open Cut Coal
MDG 3006	Chemical Oxygen (KO) Self Contained Self Rescuers
MRT4	(referenced in draft form as MDG 3004)

Copies of the above draft guidance material were forwarded to all operating underground and open cut coal mines in August 1999.

Enquires about the above guidance material and copies of these draft guidelines can be obtained from Steve Stewart at the Information Unit for Mine Safety & Environment on telephone (02) 9901 8413, fax (02) 9901 8584, or e-mail stewarts@minerals.nsw.gov.au. ■■■

MAJOR MINING EVENTS OCTOBER 1999 - MARCH 2000

OCTOBER Tues 19 - Fri 22

AIMEX "Australia's International Mining Exhibition"
Homebush Bay, Sydney
Contact: Event Administrator, Sharon Lampert,
Ph (02) 9422-2514, Fax (02) 9422-2555,
email sharon.lampert@reedbusiness.com.au

OCTOBER Mon 25 - Sun 31

Conference of Chief Inspectors of Mines
Contact: Graham Terrey,
NSW Department of Mineral Resources,
Ph (02) 9901 8470

NOVEMBER Thurs 4

Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar Penrith, NSW
Contact: Steve Stewart,
NSW Department of Mineral Resources,
Ph (02) 9901 8413, Fax (02) 9901 8584,
email stewarts@minerals.nsw.gov.au

NOVEMBER Wed 3 - Fri 5

1999 Goldfields Mining Expo Kalgoorlie, WA
Contact: The Administrator
Ph (08) 9021 2970

NOVEMBER Sun 7 - Thur 11

EXPLO '99 WMC Conference Centre, Kalgoorlie WA
Contact: AusIMM
Ph (03) 9662 3166

DECEMBER Thurs 9

DMR MS&E Area Managers Meeting - Safety Operations DMR
Wollongong Office
Contact: Geoff Simpson,
NSW Department of Mineral Resources,
Ph (02) 9901 8414

MARCH Wed 29 - Thur 30

Annual Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar Seminar Penrith,
NSW Contact: Steve Stewart,
NSW Department of Mineral Resources,
Ph (02) 9901 8413, Fax (02) 9901 8584,
email stewarts@minerals.nsw.gov.au



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Fax: (02) 9646 3224

Specialist Services and
Applied Research, Lidcombe

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Fax: (02) 9646 3224

Investigation Unit, Lidcombe

Ph: (02) 9649 8959
Fax: (02) 9649 5631

LIGHTNING RIDGE

Ph: (02) 6829 0678
Fax: (02) 6829 0825

LITHGOW

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Fax: (02) 6352 3876

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Fax: (02) 6360 8344

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(Inspectors)
(Geology)

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Ph: (02) 6572 4200
Fax: (02) 6572 1201

WAGGA WAGGA

Ph: (02) 6926 4513
Fax: (02) 6926 4515

WOLLONGONG

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Fax: (02) 4226 3851