

SAFETY ALERT



INTERSECTION WITH WATER BOREHOLES

INCIDENT

There have been a number of incidents over recent years where property owners have drilled water bores into active workings, or where workings have intersected previously drilled holes.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Water bores pose a serious hazard when drilled into mine workings or into seams that may be mined at a later time.

If a bore contains water then this head of water can force a high-pressure gush into the work area.

Downhole pumps and or electrical cabling in the hole, particularly if damaged, can provide a potential source of ignition.

INVESTIGATIONS

In most incidents neither the property owner nor the mine operator was aware of the other's activities. In this respect water boreholes present a different problem than exploration drill holes.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Land and Water Conservation was the licensing authority for water boreholes. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) now do this. The Department of Mineral Resources has provided information to the DIPNR which will allow it to broadly identify the potential for boreholes to impact mines.

Mine operators should:

- locate and record existing boreholes located within their mining lease and colliery holding, and
- maintain these records.

In addition to exploration drill holes, locate and record the presence of any water boreholes that may impact on the operation.

When locating water boreholes:

- use DIPNR records,
- consult with local landowners, and
- carry out surface investigations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R Regan".

R Regan
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFETY OPERATIONS