

FACT SHEET

Planned Inspection Program – Falling objects

Underground and surface coal operations

September 2021

Falling objects are a hazard which can occur within various mining environments and have the potential to cause serious and/or fatal injuries to workers if not controlled effectively.

This fact sheet outlines the critical controls for the risk of falling objects within the coal mining sector and should be considered by mine operators when assessing the risk at their operation.

The NSW Resources Regulator has commenced a program of planned inspections and targeted assessments which will focus on the following critical controls, ensuring compliance across the coal mining industry in NSW.



Loose item containment

Prevent items and materials falling into areas where people may work.

Exclusion zones

Exclusion zones are defined and the movement of people is controlled in areas where a falling or swinging object risk exists.



Lifting practices

Loads remain securely connected to the lifting plant for the duration of the lifting task. The weight of loads must be identified and appropriate lifting equipment selected.



Lifting plant stability and control

Lifting plant remains stable during lifting tasks.

Lifting tackle integrity

The working load limit of equipment used to connect loads to lifting devices is preserved.



Operator protective structures

Protective structures prevent mobile plant operators being struck by falling objects.

Considerations

Mine operators should consider the above criteria, as a minimum, and ensure that relevant information is included within their respective principal hazard management plans and associated documentation.

Following investigations into incidents relating to falling objects, it is evident that non-compliance with these key control measures have contributed to incident outcomes, which has caused both severe and fatal injuries to workers.

When identifying and implementing control measures, mine operators are also reminded to follow the hierarchy of controls to ensure health and safety risks are minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Other relevant safety alerts and bulletins published by the Regulator:

DATE PUBLISHED	REFERENCE	TITLE
Feb 2021	IIR21-02	Drift winder head sheave pulley wheel falls from height during winder rope removal
Nov 2018	IIR18-11	Tyre handler fatality
June 2020	Investigation Report	Report into the death of Quinton Moore at Bengalla mine 3 November 2018
June 2020	SA20-06	QDS pods fall off dolly car flat top and slide down drift
Aug 2019	Code of Practice	Managing the risks of plant in the workplace
May 2017	SA17-04	Synthetic fibre sling fails
Sep 2016	Code of Practice	Mechanical engineering control plan

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