

Compliance priority report

Risk management and supervision – surface coal mines

July 2024 to November 2024



Published by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Title: Compliance priority report–risk management and supervision–surface coal

Subtitle: July 2024 to November 2024

First published: January 2025

Department reference number: RDOC24/224802

More information

Amendment schedule		
Date	Version	Amendment
January 2025	1	First published

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development 2025. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (December 2024) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

Table of Contents

Executive summary	4
Assessment criteria for all assessments	4
Assessment findings for surface coal mines	5
Assessment overall ratings for surface coal mines	6
Tablet app recording initiative at a surface coal mine.....	7
Notices issued to surface coal mines	7
Recommendations for surface coal mines.....	8
Further information	9
Appendix A – Assessment criteria rating.....	10

Executive summary

A crucial part of the Resources Regulator’s incident prevention strategy for mines and petroleum sites involves:

- targeted assessments and planned inspection programs – focusing on assessing an operation’s control of critical risks by evaluating the effectiveness of control measures in the mine’s safety management system
- priority programs – proactively assessing a topic that is an emerging risk throughout the industry, which is determined primarily from incident data as well as evolving industry trends. Although these topics may also be contained within the Regulator’s planned inspection programs, the aim of compliance priority programs is to gather further information and knowledge about how the industry is managing and controlling a specific issue.

The compliance priority program for risk management and supervision in surface coal mines and coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP) was conducted between July 2024 and November 2024.

Between May 2023 and May 2024, 31 incidents at surface mines and CHPP were reported to the Regulator. The incident reports identified inadequate hazard identification or control or supervision as contributing factors to the causes of the incidents.

In the same period, inspector site assessments resulted in 80 compliance notices being issued which referenced supervision or risk management.

This compliance priority program assessed 29 surface coal mines and CHPP with a focus on risk management and supervision. Some the site assessments were unannounced and included tasks undertaken outside of production areas and targeted plant or machine shut-down work tasks.

This report provides information on the assessment findings and recommendations for surface coal mine operators and operators of CHPP.

In summary of the 29 surface coal mines assessed resulted in 11 compliance notices issued to 9 of the 29 surface coal mines and CHPP assessed.

Explanatory notes on the assessment system are listed in Appendix A.

Assessment criteria for all assessments

Assessment criteria were identified by the Regulator to review how surface coal mine operators managed the topics of risk management and supervision.

A tabulation of the assessment criteria for risk management and supervision at surface coal mines and CHPP is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for risk management and supervision -surface coal mines

Criteria number	Criteria
1	Evaluate workers understanding of risk management requirements through interviews or assessments, verifying that they are aware of what is required to manage hazards in their work area
2	Conduct on-site inspections to evaluate the workers knowledge of being able to identify the hazards in their work area and what controls are required to manage the hazards through interviews or assessments
3	Conduct interactions with workers to discuss
4	Observations of the work area
5	Evaluate the supervisors understanding of Inspection areas their responsibilities, inspection requirements, recording inspections, knowledge of work being conducted in their area, who is conducting the work through interviews or assessments
6	Change management questions

Assessment findings for surface coal mines

Overall, the assessment findings for surface coal mines were:

- 29 surface coal mines and CHPP were assessed
- 174 individual findings for the assessed criteria,
- 6 assessment findings with enforcement action recorded,
- 11 compliance notices were issued to 9 of the 29 surface coal mines and CHPP assessed

Figure 1 provides a summary assessment of the overall results by criteria.

Figure 1. Summary of assessment findings by criteria



In summary, the overall assessment findings by criteria were assessed as between 93% to 100%.

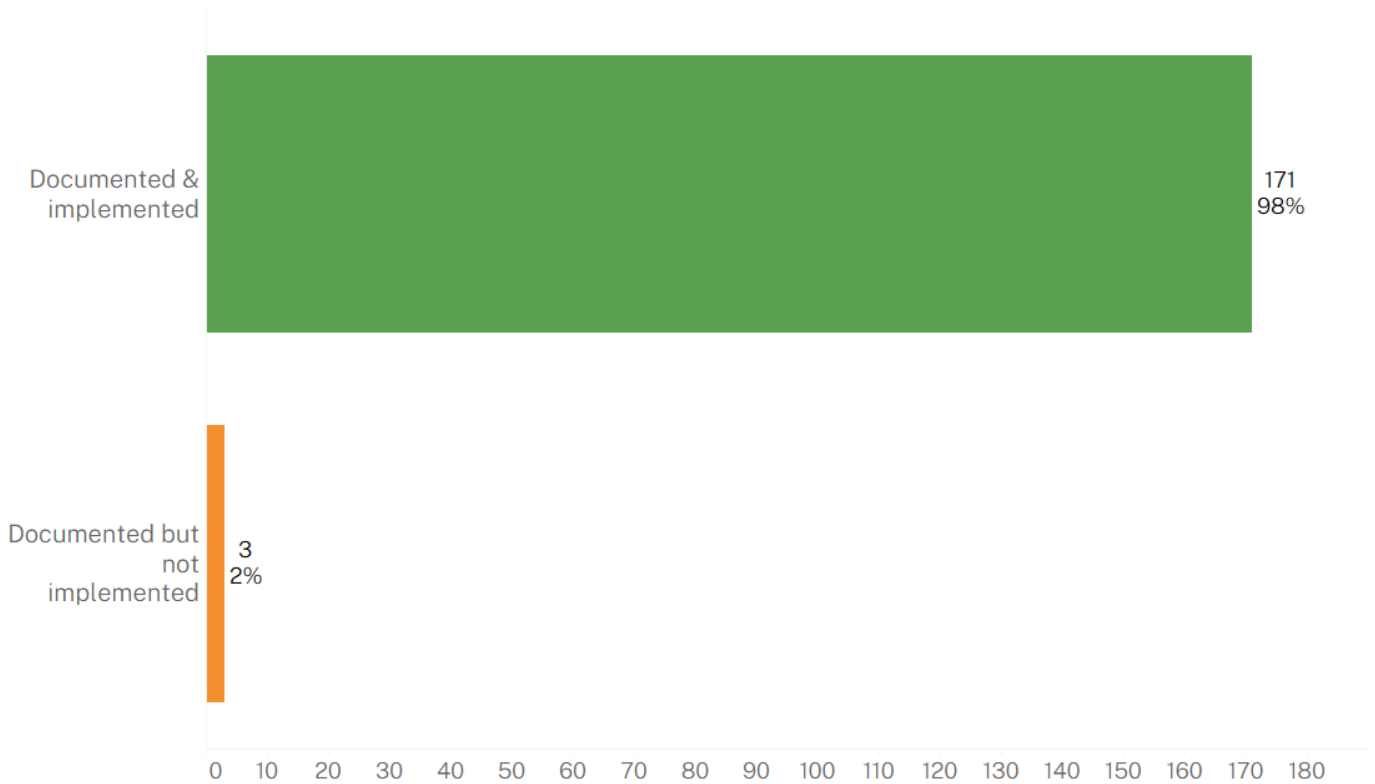
Assessment overall ratings for surface coal mines

In summary the overall assessment ratings for surface coal mines and CHPP were:

- 98% rating for documented and implemented finding
- 2% rating for documented but not implemented finding
- 0% rating for not documented and not implemented finding

The overall assessment findings ratings for surface coal mines is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Overall assessment findings ratings for surface coal mines



Tablet app recording initiative at a surface coal mine

During an assessment at a surface coal mine it was noted that supervisors contemporaneously record all field safety interactions in an electronic tablet application (tablet app). The tablet app recorded the time, place, nature of the safety interactions along with records of supervisor follow-up and corrective actions. The corrective actions were able to be assigned to a person or role, dated and tracked using the tablet app.

The surface coal mine was able to show the Inspector evidence for each supervisor and assigned workers the number of safety interactions conducted over a period of time, the details and outcomes of the safety interactions from the tablet app.

Notices issued to surface coal mines

In total, there were 29 assessments conducted at surface coal mines and CHPP.

In summary, there were 11 compliance notices issued to 9 of the 29 surface coal mines assessed comprising:

- 4 x section 191 improvement notices
- 7 x section 23 cause for concern notices

The compliance notices issued for surface coal mines and CHPP were reviewed and Table 2 lists the notices issued by type and number.

Table 2: Notices issued for surface coal mines

NOTICE TYPE	TOTAL ISSUED	NUMBER OF SITES
s.191 improvement notice	4	3
s.23 notice of concern	7	7
Total	11	9
Note: some mine sites were issued multiple notices		

Recommendations for surface coal mines

Based on the findings outlined in this report and in relation to the numbers and types of compliance notices issued during the compliance priority assessment of risk management and supervision at surface coal mines and CHPP, it is recommended that the following principal hazards or control plans should be reviewed by operators of surface coal mines:

Review of the risk management and supervision issues in compliance notices identified the following principal hazards or control plans:

- Air quality or dust or other airborne contaminants:
 - Exposure to dusts and airborne contaminants in excess of OEL and diesel exhaust emissions
 - Dust suppression, signs and barriers
 - Dust collecting in operator cabins of mobile plant
 - Stock pile dust management
- Mechanical engineering control plan:
 - Conveyor maintenance standards
 - Conveyor guarding and entanglement on mobile crushers
 - Poly welder training standards
 - Isolation permits commenced without isolation locks placed on the isolation point
 - Pressurised 25mm water hoses with ball valves left unattended on floor
- Roads or other vehicle operating areas:
 - Maintaining site compliance controls for ROVOA to documented standards
 - Mobile plant pre-start records for critical control functional testing
 - Firefighting equipment on mobile plant out of date.

Further information

For more information on safety assessment programs, the findings outlined in this report, or other mine safety information, please contact the Regulator.

CONTACT TYPE	CONTACT DETAILS
Email	cau@regional.nsw.gov.au
Incident reporting	To report an incident or injury call 1300 814 609 or log in to the Regulator Portal
Website	www.resources.nsw.gov.au
Address	Resources Regulator 516 High Street Maitland NSW 2320

Appendix A – Assessment criteria rating

Each assessed criteria is rated from one to 4 based on evidence supporting the expected control supports identified at the mine site.

Evidence supporting expected control supports

Expected control supports	Rating	Evidence supporting rating / comments				
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table>	4	3	2	1	
4	3					
2	1					

Assessment findings results are calculated based on the total points allocated to the assessed ratings as a percentage of the maximum possible points for each criteria group, and any findings rated as ‘Not applicable’ were excluded from the calculation.

Criteria assessed ratings and points

Assessed as	Rating	Points
Documented & implemented Compliant	4	4
Implemented but not documented Improvement needed	3	2
Documented but not implemented Significant improvement needed	2	1
Not documented and not implemented Non compliant	1	0
Not applicable (N/A)		

Findings results (points) with colours assigned as follows:

- Green (=100%)
- Yellow (>= 80% and <100%)
- Orange (>= 65% and <80%)
- Red (<65%)
- Not applicable