

# Safety Bulletin

Date: March 2025

## Complaints about blasting notices increase

This safety bulletin provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

### Issue

There has been an increase in complaints about blasting from owners and occupiers of land or structures adjacent to NSW mines.

The Resources Regulator has received 12 complaints related to blasting activities at mines throughout NSW over the past 6 months. Half of these complaints related to notifications of blasting activities, 10 were related to quarries and 2 were large open-cut mines.

Complaints received by the Regulator about notifications of blasting activities included:

- Not receiving any form of notification.
- Receiving notification one week before blasting but not on the day of the blast.
- No written notification.
- Who must be notified.
- When blasting can occur.

### Legislative requirements regarding notifications

Key parts of legislation regarding notification requirements include:

- The Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2022 - Section 33 Explosives and explosive precursors, and Schedule 2 Principal control plans, paragraph 4 Explosion control plan.
- In managing risks to health and safety associated with explosives and explosive precursors at a mine or petroleum site, the operator must ensure dealing with an explosive or explosive precursor at a mine or petroleum site complies with the [Explosives Act 2003](#) and Australian Standard AS 2187 Explosives – Storage, transport and use.
- An explosives control plan (ECP) must set out the control measures for risks to health and safety associated with explosives at the mine or petroleum site taking into account the full set of phases for using relevant explosives such as the charging and firing phases.

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Australian Standard AS 2187.2 – 2006 relates to the use of explosives, and is a legislative requirement. AS 2187 Appendix A2 - Blast Management Plan A2.1 - Purpose states that the purpose of the blast management plan is to assure the ‘safety of the public, site personnel and surrounding properties’. Additionally, A2.2 - Contents states that a blast plan, should include, but is not limited to, the ‘method of notification to owners and occupiers of structures, and providers of services adjacent to the blast’.

### Additional requirements for notification

Mines or quarries must have a development application (DA) from their local council granting permission to conduct blasting activities.

The DA will state various limits on blasting activities and should include:

- the times that blasting can occur
- how many times in a given period of time blasting can occur, and
- who must be notified for each blast.

This information should be used in the development of the ECP and BMP.

### Summary

While there are no direct legislative requirements for mine operators to confirm notifications have been received by parties required to be notified, best practice is achieved through either ECP or BMP and effective communication with neighbours.

Essentially, blasting can occur when; conditions of the DA, (environmental protection licence) EPL, BMP, ECP and any legislative requirements have been met, including but not limited to, notifications have been served, the exclusion zone is confirmed clear, and guards are in place.

Blasting complaints are considered in AS 2187.2 in Appendix J6.4.

The Resources Regulator will consider complaints carefully and in line with the relevant Australian Standard, government policies and limits of their jurisdiction.

### Recommendations

All blasting notification shall be presented in a format that includes an agreed or common language used for all site personnel and public.

Mine operators should have notification procedures in their ECP that include:

- a register of all people to be notified in accordance with the DA, and all other relevant stakeholders as identified by AS 2187.2 and the mine’s risk assessment
- multiple contact details (where possible) for each stakeholder such as phone numbers, email addresses, residential or other address or social media accounts
- the person’s preferred method of contact (where possible)
- methods to confirm that contact details are kept accurate
- procedures to manage notification of delayed blasts

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- records of attempts made to notify, and confirmation if notification was received
- instruction on managing failed notification attempts
- consideration of timing (e.g. one week before and x hours before the blast)
- consideration that more than one form of direct communication should be used (e.g. email and phone call) and at least one indirect form (e.g. billboards, newspaper or radio advertisement)
- reminders to relevant stakeholders to update their contact details and how (noting not everyone has access to or can use email services)
- clear instructions on using blast notification signs
- clear instructions on how to clear the exclusion zone.

Where possible, it is also recommended that mine operators design blasting activities to reduce the exclusion zone footprint and therefore reduce the impact on sensitive areas, neighbouring properties and services.

The exclusion zone is established via a risk assessment process when designing the blast. Any blast that is designed correctly can still have an increase in the exclusion zones. This is dependent on how the shot is loaded, free faces, firing direction and issues encountered during loading that may affect the outcome of the blast. Example: Were there any overloaded or under-burdened holes that could not be rectified?

Hence, there are a number of factors associated with on-bench work that will require additional consideration when determining exclusion zones, external notification, guard locations and shotfiring position.

Owners and occupiers of land or structures adjacent to the mine or quarry conducting blasting should:

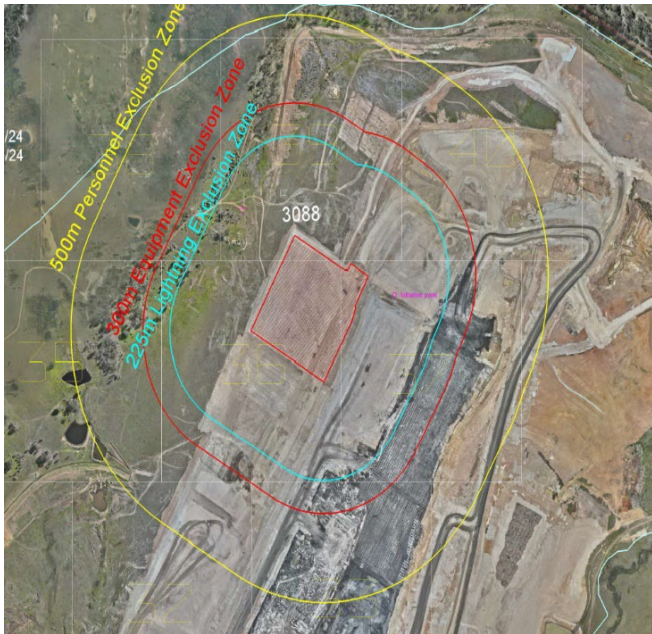
- Ensure the mine or quarry has your preferred contact details and alternative contact details for blast notifications
- Provide your new contact details to the mine or quarry as soon as possible if your contact details change
- Understand the blast exclusion zone and do not enter this area near blasting times
- If you don't understand where the blast exclusion zone limits are, ask the mine to explain or provide further details such as maps and details of safe areas to be.

Notification may include other relevant external parties to the mine and quarry sites within close proximity of the blasting area (e.g. rural lease/land holders and sensitive areas).

Notification of these parties may include telephone communications, emails and/or face to face meetings.

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Figure: 1 Example of exclusion zones from a mine, showing personnel, equipment and lightning zones



## Additional information

[Resources Regulator, Compliance Priorities Outcomes, Blast exclusion zones in small mines, March 2021](#)

**Note:** Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this safety bulletin and are informed of its content and recommendations. This safety bulletin should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine’s information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine’s common area, such as your notice board where appropriate.

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