

# Changes to airborne contaminants and dust **EXPOSURE STANDARDS**

In NSW mines, no person is to be exposed to dust and airborne contaminants that exceed exposure standards and mines must ensure worker exposure is as low as reasonably practicable. The workplace exposure standards for airborne contaminants and dust have been revised and are set out below.

## **SILICA**

One of the most common dusts encountered on mine sites is silica dust or Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS).

### **Workplace exposure standard**

- 0.05mg/m<sup>3</sup> - commenced 1 July 2020.

### **Regulation**

- Mines and petroleum sites need to report exceedances of the new exposure standard to the NSW Resources Regulator.
- Penalties may apply for failure to notify the NSW Resources Regulator of an adverse health monitoring report.

## **COAL DUST**

Mine workers are at risk for respiratory diseases caused by coal mine dust. Miners with combined exposures to coal and crystalline silica dust can also get mixed dust pneumoconiosis.

### **Workplace exposure standard**

- New exposure standard of 1.5mg/m<sup>3</sup> commenced 1 February 2021.

### **Regulation**

- Mines and petroleum sites need to report exceedances of the exposure standard to the NSW Resources Regulator.
- Penalties may apply for failure to notify the NSW Resources Regulator of an adverse health monitoring report.

## **DIESEL EMISSIONS**

Underground miners are exposed to concentrations of diesel particulate matter that are significantly higher than those in any other occupations.

### **Workplace exposure standard**

- NSW is the first mining jurisdiction in Australia to implement an exposure standard for diesel particulate matter.
- The exposure standard of 0.1mg/m<sup>3</sup> commenced 1 February 2021.

### **Regulation**

- Mines need to adhere to the regulatory requirement as described in clause 39 (all mines) and 55(1)(c) - underground mines of the WHS (MPS) Regulation 2014.

**ELIMINATION**

**SUBSTITUTION**

**ENGINEERING CONTROLS**

**ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS**

**PPE**

The aim is to reduce airborne contaminants and dust generation. The order in which controls are implemented must follow the hierarchy of controls - elimination, substitution, engineering, administrative and personal protective equipment. Personal protective equipment is a last line of defence against exposure.

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