

Compliance Priorities Outcomes

Change Management

Change Management

Issue: Several serious incidents occurred in 2018 and 2019 which are indicative of change management issues. For example, in September 2018 a floating concentrator sank at a dredging operation. At a quarry, a relatively new conveyor gantry collapsed after it had been modified by adding extra mass to the structure.

Change must be managed appropriately, otherwise hazards introduced due to change may not be adequately controlled and lead to an unwanted event occurring.

What we did

We assessed 32 sites between February and June 2020. Sites were assessed on the following:

- Has a change management policy or procedures been developed and implemented?
- Has a change management checklist been developed and implemented to ensure assigned actions completed?
- Has a risk assessment been undertaken when change was considered?
- Have engineering considerations been evaluated and approved?
- Have a relevant cross section of workers been consulted about change?
- Have affected workers been adequately trained in any new or different processes?
- Was the change communicated to the workforce?

What we found

The findings below may be specific to all or only some of the sites assessed.

- A change management procedure or policy existed but was not being used as intended or at all.
- No checklist was available to follow during the introduction of change. A change management checklist helps ensure the process is followed completely including implementation of agreed controls.
- A change management process was not used to manage change following recommendations from incident investigation.
- The change management procedure does not cover preventing unauthorised modification to plant and equipment.
- There was a strong commitment to consultation and communication of change.
- All mines assessed had a change management process that includes engineering considerations for modifications to plant and equipment.

Outcome

The assessments resulted in the following-

- two section 195 notices were issued
- seven Section 191 notices were issued
- eight Section 23 notices were issued.

Next steps

The Regulator will continue to monitor the incident trends in this area to determine whether a broader and deeper assessment of industry practice is required.

Recommendations

When change is considered at a mine, the mine operator should:

- Ensure that a relevant cross section of workers is consulted regarding the proposed change.
- Ensure that any new or different risks to health and safety are assessed and appropriate controls applied.
- Ensure that engineering design requirements are fully complied with.
- Ensure that new or different plant introduced is fit for purpose.
- Ensure that workers are adequately trained.
- Ensure that changes are communicated in an effective way.
- Develop a change management checklist to ensure that all agreed actions are addressed. This will help keep a consistent approach to managing change at the mine.

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