



## MINE SAFETY REGULATORY REFORM

# Implementing the Incident Prevention Strategy - update

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (November 2016). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development or the user's independent advisor.

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# Incident Prevention Strategy

The *Mine Safety Regulatory Reform Incident Prevention Strategy* was published in February 2016. It provides the justification and framework for major reform in the way that mine safety is regulated and how NSW Mine Safety seek to maximize compliance with the obligations of the *Work Health and Safety (Mine and Petroleum Sites) Act 2014* and associated regulations.

The strategy provides for an ambitious program of reform across the Mine Safety functions, focused on three main areas:

- **Risk based intervention** – development of a framework for the ongoing identification and verification of risk profiling, incorporating risk control measure verification, and the consideration of deployment practices to target areas of risk priority.
- **Human and organisational factors** – research into, and consideration of, the impact of human and organisational factors on risk management and reporting.
- **Quality data** – processes for the collection, analysis and use of robust data sources to support the risk-based intervention strategy, incorporating the consideration of human and organisational factors.

Over the past 6 months, many aspects of these focus areas have been progressed or implemented. This has led to significant improvements in the way that the mine safety operations of the NSW Resources Regulator function.

## Resources Regulator

The NSW Resources Regulator was formed on the 1 July 2016 to undertake the compliance and enforcement functions of a broad range of activities within the resources sector, including Mine Safety. This structural change will enable the Resources Regulator to build upon the work of the Mine Safety unit in providing a more transparent, robust and consistent approach to regulation across all aspects of the resources sector.

## Project updates

### Centralised incident notification reporting

On 4 July 2016 a process of centralised incident notification reporting was introduced for all incident notifications. This involved the establishment of a single point of contact - 1300 814 609 - for all incident notifications, and the creation of a dedicated team of mine safety inspectors and support staff to manage the calls – the central assessment unit. Rather than individual inspectors being responsible for particular mines and sites, the reporting of incidents is managed centrally and allocated to a duty inspector should a response be required.

This centralised process ensures that all calls are appropriately responded to in a timely manner, with mine safety inspectors on-call to provide expert, technical advice around the clock. It also improves consistency in the way that calls are managed and responded to through a robust process of triaging information and response allocation.

The centralised process assists the unit in implementing other aspects of the strategy through the collection of consistent and comprehensive information about each call, and through the freeing-up of inspectors to enable them to undertake other important tasks.

## Primary contact inspector

The centralised notification process was an important component of the overall strategy, however there are recognised benefits to an inspector having a detailed working knowledge of a particular site. This includes knowledge of the safety management systems, the people and equipment, the management team and statutory position holders.

In order to retain the benefits that these relationships and knowledge bring, a system of primary contact inspector has been established. Complex and high-risk sites have been allocated an inspector who is responsible for receiving enquiries relating to that site and providing a point of contact for non-urgent matters. The primary contact inspector also liaises with the centralised assessment unit team and responding inspector in the event of an incident, providing detailed site knowledge as required.

## Targeted assessments

The program of targeted assessments provides for both a planned, proactive program of assessing how effective an operation is at controlling critical risks (Targeted assessment program – TAP), and a reactive intervention program (Targeted intervention program – TIP). Targeted assessments review an operation's control measures and the effectiveness of their implementation for particular targeted critical risks.

Initial targeted assessments have been undertaken into methane gas and ventilation management for underground coal mines, with a full program of TAP assessments planned for principal hazards over the next two years.

TIP assessments will be undertaken as the need arises, including in response to incidents, and from the analysis of information indicating emerging issues or a change in risk profile of an operation.

Each targeted assessment involves a team of inspectors from various disciplines. It provides for a detailed review of principal hazard management plans and principal control plans for the hazard, and a detailed on-site assessment of the processes and procedures and their implementation. Any improvement advice or notices in response to the assessment are issued at the time, with a detailed report of findings and recommendations prepared and provided to the site management.

As the program of assessments progresses it is also proposed to publish reports of the common findings of the assessments and any general recommendations. This will provide a valuable resource for industry in relation to the principal hazards.

## Human and organisational factors

The human and organisational factors team has continued to build upon its engagement activities with mine sites and operators to promote the consideration of human and organisational factors in mine operations and incident responses. Recent activities have focused on the issues around roof bolting incidents, and promotion of the participatory ergonomics program.

The human and organisational factors tool kit continues to be developed, comprising the human and organisational factors management assessment tool (HOFMAT) and human and organisational management evaluation tool (HOFMET). This includes the development of internal processes to incorporate the human and organisational factor considerations into the reporting and assessment of incidents and risk management.

It is anticipated that the HOFMAT tool will be released in early 2017.

## Quality information

Robust processes for the collection and analysis of quality information are being internally implemented. The process of centralised reporting has provided an important tool in the gathering of consistent information on incidents, which can in turn inform the program of targeted assessments, and inform risk and hazard ranking.

Further developments in the collection and ability to analyse the vast array of data and information will be made during the next few months with the procurement of data mining software that will integrate with the existing systems. This will improve the ability to consider all the information and use it to further inform the targeted programs and the best use of resources.

## Conclusion

A great deal of work has already been done to implement the processes and procedures of the Incident Prevention Strategy. The centralisation of incident notifications has proved pivotal in releasing resources to support the other aspects of the reform, and in establishing a process for consistent data collection in relation to incidents. This has, in turn, allowed a shift in focus to more proactive work supported by quality information to guide resource allocation.

The next few months will see continued development and refinement of the programs of the strategy. The strategy will continue to be monitored and refined to ensure that the mission of Mine Safety, to be a leader by enabling, supporting and focusing the mining and petroleum industries on preventing workplace death, injury, illness and disease, is upheld.