NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

SAFETY BULLETIN

Operator behaviour around remote control equipment

BACKGROUND

Since the introduction of remote control equipment into the mining industry, there have been numerous incidents putting persons at risk. Some accidents have resulted in serious injuries and a number of fatalities. Previous safety alerts provide particulars on several such serious accidents.

Despite industry efforts and technological advances made with remote control equipment, accidents continue to occur. Operator behaviour around remote control equipment is an important issue to consider in managing the risk. The following recommendations advise industry to revisit this risk area and ensure the health and safety of persons involved with remote control equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Management should

1. ensure a relevant risk assessment has been undertaken, and safe operating procedures developed, including all non-routine work on or about remote control equipment operations.

2. undertake a formal and documented workplace audit of remote control equipment operations for personnel compliance with "control zones", "no standing zones" and "isolation rules" with reference to MDG 5002 and MDG 5002a.

3. ensure the compliance audit method accesses equipment data logging information, regarding isolation, where available.

4. specify requirements for event data logging on remote controlled machines prior to acquisition or overhaul of such machines. Such specifications should consider the associated risks of accessing the data and how that data supports Occupational Health and Safety Systems used at the mine.

5. review the recommendations of MDG 5004 – C. J. Pitzer Report and implement behaviour modification strategies where non-compliances are identified in audit

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6. review training systems for inexperienced persons and existing personnel to ensure competency in mining systems and procedures associated with remote controlled mining operations

7. ensure that inspection reports are made in accordance with MDG 5002 and the mine inspection systems and those reports are retained in the mine record keeping system.

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 notice board.

Signed

Rob Regan
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