

June 2023 – February 2024

Examiners' report

Open cut examiner of coal mines other than underground coal mines Certificate of competence

Examiners' Report 2023 - 2024

Written examination

OCE1 – Legislation

Summary of results and general comments

Exam date: 14 June 2023

Number of candidates: 53

Number passed: 34

Highest mark: 92%

Average mark: 65.3%

Lowest mark: 30.5%

Question 1 (total of 25 marks) OCE Role

Highest mark: 25

Average mark: 16.2

Lowest mark: 3

Examiners' comments:

Candidates with a good knowledge of Sections 31, 39 and 88 of the Regulation scored well. Most candidates had sound knowledge of Section 31. Many were unable to display competence regarding Inspection Plan statutory requirements detailed in Section 88.

Question 2 (total of 25 marks) Incident

Highest mark: 25

Average mark: 19.2

Lowest mark: 9

Examiners' comments:

Overall good response and understanding of what is a notifiable incident and contents of Section 14. However, some defined an incident as involving multiple deaths and generalised the meaning of an incident without defining it. Many candidates missed notification to ISHR and failed to mention any consultation between the inspector and ISHR to release the scene.

Generally good response and practical management in the discovery of lead and booster in the dig face question. However, some candidates were excessive with exclusion zones and also managed as Dangerous incident instead of HPI.

Question 3 (total of 25 marks) Safety and Health

Highest mark: 22

Average mark: 12.4

Lowest mark: 6

Examiners' comments:

Most candidates had a good understanding of key health and safety representatives on site. The one key position which was often not acknowledged was the electrical safety and health representative. Most candidates were aware of the main responsibilities of SSHR's representing workers and raising concerns, however they did not:

- comprehensively state requirements of SSHR to provide notice for conducting inspections,
- address involvement with the interviews of worker/workers with PCBU or an inspector.

There were numerous candidates who addressed general consultation requirements of workers, as opposed to specific functions which apply to an SSHR. Most candidates failed to acknowledge that the question was asking for additional functions that an ISHR has compared to an SSHR. A key point which was commonly mistaken is the difference of involvement that SSHR's & ISHR's have with regards to investigations of events, occurrences or notifiable incidents.

Candidates often did not recognise that ISHR's may accompany an inspector during an inspection. Most candidates were aware that an SSHR does have the authority to cease work under certain circumstances, however often failed to recognise the need for consultation between the SSHR and PCBU, as well as the requirement to have specific training. Some candidates incorrectly stated that only an ISHR or Inspector has this authority.

Question 4 (total of 25 marks) PHMP & Hazards

Highest mark: 23

Average mark: 17.5

Lowest mark: 7.5

Examiners' comments:

Candidates are expected to know what type of incidents are to be reported imminently or as soon as practicable as per the WHS (MPS) Regulations.

Overall knowledge of the hazards the Health Control Plan must address was poor. When a question asked to list the 3 key aspects, many candidates listed more than 3. Therefore, marks were deducted. A number of candidates missed important typical psychosocial hazards such as sexual harassment, bullying and conflict etc. Overall, knowledge of the legislated PCP's was excellent.

OCE2 – Practical open cut operations

Summary of results and general comments

Exam date: 14 June 2023

Number of candidates: 69

Number passed: 50

Highest mark: 85%

Average mark: 64%

Lowest mark: 39%

Question 1 (total of 50 marks) Slope stability

Highest mark: 44

Average mark: 26

Lowest mark: 12

Examiners' comments:

Candidates had a strong awareness of key hazards which were prevalent within the scenario described. Most candidates recognised the need to seek input from a geotechnical engineer or geologist and often described the need to evacuate personnel based on the risk of potential stability issues. That said, the majority of candidates did not feel it was necessary to raise an emergency even though they had identified a risk to health and safety. Very few candidates considered the risk to the dragline working above and potential instability of spoils. Very few candidates felt the need to inform the Mining Engineering Manager of this scenario.

Most candidates consulted with key stakeholders in the development of a risk assessment, however often did not involve the Mining Engineering Manager. Most candidates were aware of the pressure placed on the floor by lowwall spoil loading, but did not detail all other possible causes.

Question 2 (total of 50 marks) Mining Practices

Highest mark: 50

Average mark: 41.2

Lowest mark: 22

Examiners' comments:

Overall, most candidates provided good answers and some were excellent. Most candidates identified hazards and controls associated with working in and around underground workings. Some candidates lacked detail in how to practically mine the overburden and coal however most performed very well. Some answers failed to mention roadway clean out or had inefficient mining methods that could result in high dilution and costs to recover coal and mine overburden.

Question 3 (total of 50 marks) Incident management

Highest mark: 47

Average mark: 34.3

Lowest mark: 20

Examiners' comments:

Most candidates were able to display competence regarding immediate actions after an incident occurred and the requirements to report it as a dangerous incident under Section 190. Most candidates took control and were able to risk assess hazards in the immediate work area but did not control the scene and activities external to the scene adequately. In addition, many candidates also did not control the risk of minor injury to involved personnel. Most candidates adequately stated the requirement to inspect remaining fleet by a competent person. Many candidates failed to meet statutory handover requirements to oncoming shift, in particular the requirement to record the incident in the mine's statutory inspection register.

Question 4 (total of 50 marks) Fire Incident

Highest mark: 42.5

Average mark: 26.9

Lowest mark: 6

Examiners' comments:

There was excessive use of assumptions to make the question easier. For example, assuming there is no fire, or the fire is out, or assuming the MMU isn't loaded are not acceptable assumptions. Numerous candidates assumed the fire was very small to make the question easier and only to report the fire as a 190 Dangerous Incident. Therefore, marks were deducted for this. Very few candidates took the time to explain "Why" the incident was reported as a 124 or 190. Most answered 190 but provided little to support that decision. Many candidates missed gathering basic information such as photos and witness statements. Many candidates failed to provide enough depth and detail to answer the last part of the question. In many cases, the remaining hazard of preserved MMU on haul road was either overlooked or insufficient communications were provided to the crew (e.g. of the hazard and the risks/controls provided to the crew).

Oral examination

Date: 16 -17 August 2023

Number of candidates: 43

Number deemed competent: 19

Post Oral examination

Date: 8 February 2024

Number of candidates: 20

Number deemed competent: 11

More information

Regional NSW

Resources Regulator

Mining Competence Team

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Acknowledgments

Open cut examiner of coal mines other than underground coal mines examination panel

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