

Compliance priority report

Risk management and supervision – coal mines

January 2025 to June 2025



Published by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Title: Compliance priority report – risk management and supervision – coal mines - January 2025 to June 2025
First published: July 2025
Department reference number: D25/60414

More information

Amendment schedule		
Date	Version	Amendment
July 2025	1	First published

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Executive summary

A crucial part of the Resources Regulator’s incident prevention strategy for mines and petroleum sites involves:

- targeted assessments and planned inspection programs – focusing on assessing an operation’s control of critical risks by evaluating the effectiveness of control measures in the mine’s safety management system
- priority programs – proactively assessing a topic that is an emerging risk throughout the industry, which is determined primarily from incident data as well as evolving industry trends.

Incidents reported to the Regulator between May 2023 and May 2024 included 31 incidents at open-cut and underground mines (coal, metalliferous and extractives sites) that identified inadequate hazard identification, and control or supervision as contributing factors.

Over the same time, Regulator assessments resulted in 80 notices being issued to mine operators that referenced the topics of supervision or risk management.

This report summarises the compliance priority program undertaken at surface and underground coal mine sites for reviewing risk management and supervision between January 2025 and June 2025. The assessment program included unannounced backshift and weekend inspections to review work tasks undertaken outside of production areas and targeted plant or machine shut-down work tasks.

The 46 coal mine sites assessed (surface and underground) consisted of:

- 23 open-cut coal mines
- 4 coal handling and processing plant
- 19 underground coal mines.

The Regulator developed 6 assessment criteria to review risk management and supervision at coal mines. This report provides information on assessment findings and recommendations for operators of surface and underground coal mines.

In summary, of the 46 coal mine sites assessed, a total of 35 compliance notices were issued to 12 of the 27 surface coal mine sites assessed and 11 of the 19 underground coal mines assessed.

Explanatory notes on the assessment system are in Appendix A.

Assessment criteria for assessments

A table detailing the criteria for reviewing risk management and supervision at coal mine sites is in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria for risk management and supervision – coal mine sites

Criteria number	Criteria
1	Evaluate workers' understanding of risk management requirements through interviews or assessments, verifying they are aware of what is required to manage hazards in their work area.
2	Conduct on-site inspections to evaluate the workers' knowledge of being able to identify the hazards in their work area and what controls are required to manage the hazards through interviews or assessments.
3	Conduct interactions with workers to discuss site procedures and supervision
4	Observations of the work area
5	Evaluate the supervisors' understanding of inspection areas, their responsibilities, inspection requirements, recording inspections, knowledge of work being conducted in their area, who is conducting the work through interviews or assessments.
6	Change management questions.

Assessment findings for coal mine sites

Overall, the assessment findings for 46 coal mine sites assessed were:

- 23 open-cut coal mines assessed
- 4 coal handling and processing plant assessed
- 19 underground coal mines assessed
- 276 individual findings for the assessed criteria
- 35 compliance notices were issued to:
 - 12 of the 27 surface coal mine sites assessed
 - 11 of the 19 underground coal mines assessed.

Assessment overall ratings for coal mine sites

In summary, the overall assessment findings for coal mine sites assessed were:

- 96% assessment overall finding for the 6 criteria assessed.

Figure 1 provides a summary assessment of the overall findings by criteria for coal mine sites (surface and underground sites combined).

Figure 1: Summary assessment findings by criteria for coal mine sites (surface and underground)

1	Evaluate workers understanding of risk management requirements through interviews or assessments, verifying that they are aware of what is required to manage hazards in their work area	91%
2	Conduct on-site inspections to evaluate the workers knowledge of being able to identify the hazards in their work area and what controls are required to manage the hazards through interviews or assessments	93%
3	Conduct interactions with workers to discuss	97%
4	Observations of the work area	94%
5	Evaluate the Supervisors understanding of Inspection areas their responsibilities, inspection requirements, recording inspections, knowledge of work being conducted in their area, who is conducting the work through interviews or assessments	100%
6	Change management questions	98%
Grand Total		96%

■ Green (=100%)
■ Yellow (>= 80% and <100%)
■ Orange (>= 65% and <80%)
■ Red (<65%)
■ Not applicable

In summary, the overall assessment ratings were 93% documented and implemented, 1% implemented but not documented, 5% documented but not implemented and 1% were not applicable.

Figure 2 provides an overall assessment findings ratings for coal mine sites assessed.

Figure 2: c

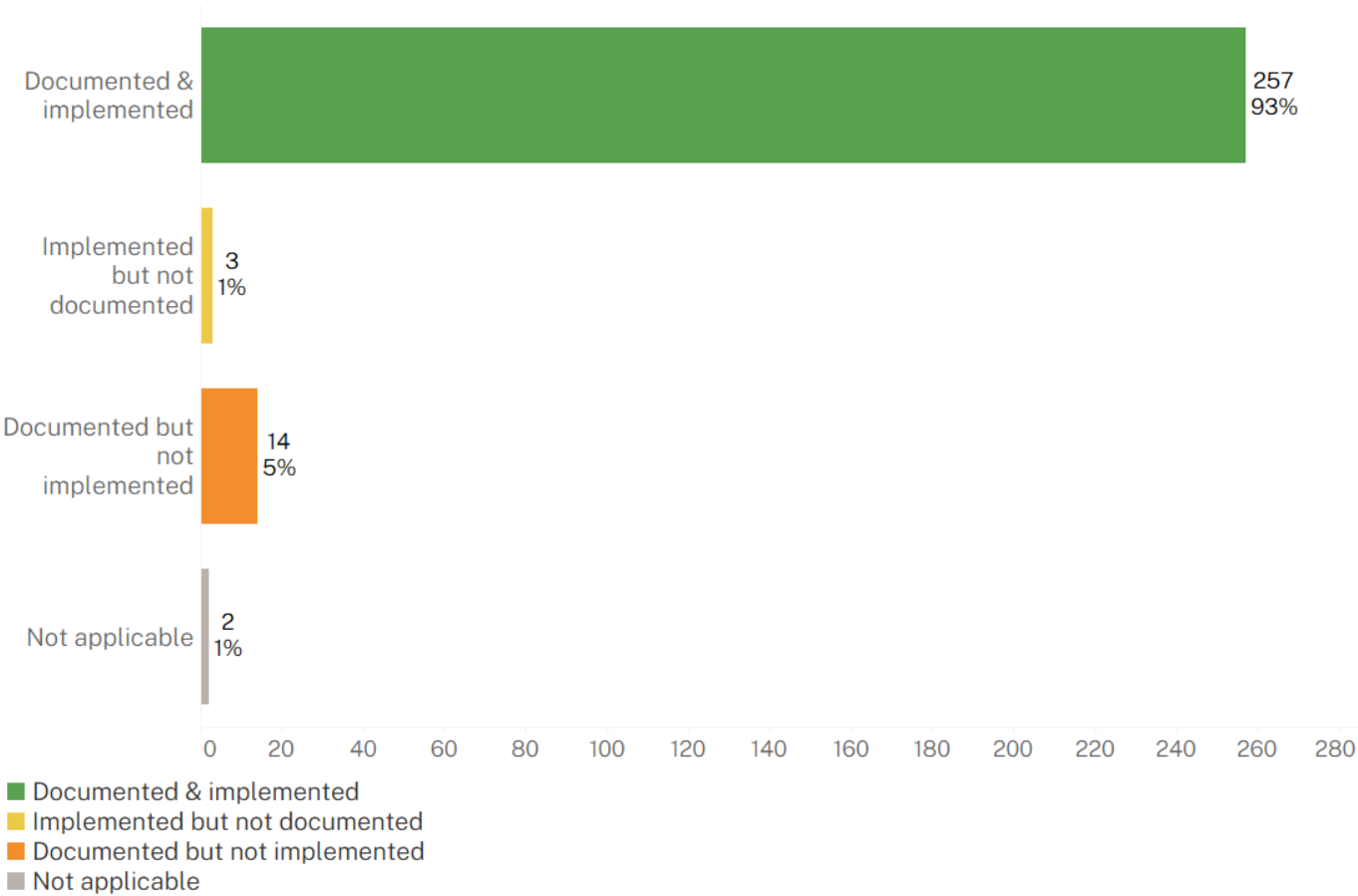


Figure 3 provides an overall assessment findings by criteria coal mine sites assessed.

Figure 3: Overall assessment findings ratings by criteria at coal mine sites assessed



Notices issued to coal mine operators (surface and underground)

In total, 46 assessments were conducted at coal mine sites (surface and underground).

In summary, of the 46 coal mine sites assessed, a total of 35 compliance notices were issued to 12 of the 27 surface coal mine sites assessed and 11 of the 19 underground coal mines assessed.

The compliance notices comprised of:

- 1 x section 195 prohibition notices
- 14 x section 191 improvement notices
- 20 x section 23 cause for concern notices.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* s195 prohibition notices issued related to the topic of risk management and supervision controls in the site mechanical engineering control plan (MECP) for the operation of a rope winch unit.

Fourteen *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* s191 improvement notices issued related to the topic of risk management and supervision.

Twenty *Work Health and Safety Act (Mines and Petroleum Sites) 2013* s23 notice of concern issued related to the topic of risk management and supervision.

Table 3 lists the compliance notices issued by type and number at coal mine sites assessed.

Table 3: Notices issued for coal mine sites assessed

Category	Surface	Underground	Grand Total
WHS(MPS)A s23 notice of concerns	6	14	20
WHS s191 improvement notice	9	5	14
WHS s195 prohibition notice		1	1
Grand Total	15	20	35

Recommendations for operators of coal mines

Based on the findings outlined in this report, and in relation to the numbers and types of compliance notices issued during the compliance priority program assessment of risk management and supervision at coal mine sites, it is recommended that the following should be reviewed by operators of coal mines (surface and underground):

Review the site principal hazard management and principal control plans for risk management and supervision topics and review information resources provided on the Regulator's website at:

www.resources.nsw.gov.au/resources-regulator/safety/health-and-safety-management:

Risk management

- Explosives control plan – investigate misfires and manage explosive storage and transport.
- Emergency management – emergency management plans provided in the work place.
- MECP – maintaining rope winches, lifting equipment, quick detach systems self-escape systems, armoured face conveyor chain isolation systems, mobile plant ladder access systems, entanglement management and guarding of equipment, falling objects during maintenance tasks.
- Roads and other vehicle operating areas (ROVOA) – roadway design, maintaining operating areas, vehicle speed management and positive communication (pos comms).
- Ground or strata – longwall tailgate management, slope monitoring and assessment.
- Ventilation control plan – management of gas alarms, ventilation devices lock management, proper use of ventilation devices and dust control.

- Health control plan – facial hair standards while using personal protection equipment (PPE), location of first aid equipment, work place cleanliness standards, remote worker communication device standards.
- Training and competency – workers trained and assessed as competent for work tasks.
- PPE – provision of adequate PPE for the task to site standards.

Supervision

- Explosives – communication and training for managing explosives.
- Emergency management – monitoring workplace information for emergency management plans.
- MECP – supervising maintenance tasks and equipment reporting systems compliance, monitoring for falling objects during work tasks.
- ROVOA – supervision and monitoring site ROVOA standards including pos comms standards .
- Ground or strata – reporting systems compliance.
- Ventilation control plan – ventilation reporting systems compliance.
- Health control plan – workers’ compliance with facial hair standards, monitoring location of first aid equipment and work place cleanliness standards, monitoring use of communication devices for remote workers.
- Training and competency – monitoring compliance with worker training and competency assessment for work tasks.
- PPE- supervision of worker use of PPE.

For more information on safety assessment programs, the findings outlined in this report, or other mine safety information, please contact the Regulator.

Contact	Contact details
Email	cau@regional.nsw.gov.au
Incident reporting	To report an incident or injury call 1300 814 609 or log in to the Regulator Portal
Website	www.resources.nsw.gov.au
Address	Resources Regulator 516 High Street Maitland NSW 2320

Appendix A – Assessment criteria rating

Each assessed criteria is rated from one to 4 based on evidence supporting the expected control supports identified at the mine site.

Evidence supporting expected control supports

Expected control supports	Rating	Evidence supporting rating / comments				
	<table><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr></table>	4	3	2	1	
4	3					
2	1					

Assessment findings results are calculated based on the total points allocated to the assessed ratings as a percentage of the maximum possible points for each criteria group, and any findings rated as 'Not applicable' were excluded from the calculation.

Criteria assessed ratings and points

Assessed as	Rating	Points
Documented & implemented Compliant	4	4
Implemented but not documented Improvement needed	3	2
Documented but not implemented Significant improvement needed	2	1
Not documented and not implemented Non compliant	1	0
Not applicable (N/A)		

Findings results (points) with colours assigned as follows:

- Green (=100%)
- Yellow (>= 80% and <100%)
- Orange (>= 65% and <80%)
- Red (<65%)
- Not applicable