

Safety Alert

Date: October 2025

Double fatality after unintended initiation of explosive device

This safety alert provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Incident

The incident occurred underground at an underground metalliferous mine.

Workers were preparing a ballistic disc explosive device to clear a blockage in the draw point of a stope. An unintended initiation of the charge resulted in fatal injuries to 2 workers and injuries to a third worker at Cobar in NSW on 28 October 2025.

Circumstances

At the time of the incident, workers were tasked with removing a blockage from a stope by using a ballistic disc explosive device. Workers were in the process of setting up when the unintended initiation of the device occurred.

Investigation

The Resources Regulator has commenced a full investigation into this incident. The investigation is at an early stage and no definitive causal factors contributing to this incident have yet been identified.

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Picture 1: Example of a ballistic disc explosive device



Regulator action

The Regulator is engaging with manufacturers, suppliers, and mine operators who currently manufacture, supply or hold/use ballistic-disc type explosive charges, as well as SafeWork NSW who license the ballistic disc device. The Regulator may prohibit the supply and use of explosive charges if it believes the use of the charges involves a serious risk to the health or safety of people at a mine site.

Recommendations

Due to the serious nature of this incident, the Regulator recommends that mine operators should do the following while this incident is under investigation:

- Review their risk assessments regarding the use of explosives on site.
- Reconsider the need to use ballistic disc explosive devices in mining applications.
- Consider reasonably practicable alternative methods for clearing blockages in stopes.

Note: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety Alert and are informed of its content and recommendations. This Safety Alert should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's common area (such as the mine's notice board) where appropriate.

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