

SAFETY BULLETIN

DATE: APRIL 2021

Flyrock from blasting activities

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

Issue

Several incidents have recently been reported to the NSW Resources Regulator where mine operators sustained damage to equipment and infrastructure and exposed their workers to significant health and safety risks due to flyrock caused by blasting activities.

The severity of the outcomes of these incidents has ranged from a near miss to minor injuries to personnel involved, as well as damage to equipment and buildings.

The potential outcome of these incidents could have been severe and/or fatal injuries.

Figure 1 Flyrock lands adjacent to sentry vehicle



Sentry Vehicle

Location of flyrock

Figure 2 Flyrock contacts operating equipment from a blast



Blast Area

Operating Mining Equipment

Figure 3 Equipment damaged by flyrock



Broken window

Recommendations

It is recommended that mine operators ensure that:

- a risk assessment for conducting blasting activities has been completed, and that this risk assessment is undertaken and reviewed in accordance with the requirements of Part 2 of the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014
- procedures for conducting blasting activities are developed and implemented which incorporate the control measures identified in the risk assessment
- blasting activities are only undertaken by persons who are trained and assessed as competent to perform the work
- blasting activities are planned, all stakeholders are advised prior to firing blasts, notification of blast times and the location provided to workers prior to accessing mine sites
- drill and blast areas are assessed for any changes to ground and strata conditions prior to designing blast patterns
- drill patterns are drilled as per the plan and holes are checked or surveyed to ensure they are drilled in the correct location and depth
- approved explosives are used, loaded as per the plan and any non-compliance to the plan must be reported prior to firing the blast
- blast exclusions zones must be established, people and equipment must be in a safe location away from the free face (out of the line of fire) prior to and during firing of the blast
- sites ensure blast exclusions zones are increased in areas where blast conditions have changed or non-compliance to drill and blast plans have been identified
- sites must ensure blast areas remain cleared until the blast has been fired and the all clear has been given by the person firing the blast.

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 common area, such as your notice board where appropriate.

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