

SAFETY BULLETIN

DATE: DECEMBER 2020

Increased Risk Period

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

Background

The NSW Resources Regulator understands that Christmas can be a difficult time for many people. The cumulative impacts of COVID-19 in 2020 will only serve to heighten stress this year. It can be a time of excess and induce a rise in mental health issues, especially for FIFO mine workers and those working at remote mine sites.

Protecting the health and safety of mining employees, contractors and communities is particularly important during the Christmas and New Year period.

Safety in the mining sector needs to be top-of-mind for every employee, every single day. It needs to be woven into the fabric of the day-to-day culture. We want all mine workers to be safe.

Considerations

Christmas can be a time of celebration and indulgence, or acute loneliness – all of which can be characterised by excessive consumption of alcohol. This can be problematic for people rostered to work over the holiday period, in terms of appropriately managing fatigue and their fitness for work more generally.

Perhaps the most significant stressor for those employed in the mining industry is that some sectors are currently subject to significant adjustment in response to challenging market conditions. The potential impact this has on people's behaviour at work cannot be understated.

Recommendations

Workers

- Take all reasonable steps to understand and comply with the requirements of fitness for work and fatigue management plans.
- Understand your duties under s28 of the Work Health and Safety Act (2011) to take reasonable care of your own safety and to ensure your actions do not adversely impact on the health and safety of others.

Mine Operators

- Reinforce to workers and supervisors their obligations under fitness for work and fatigue management plans.
- Verify that all controls identified in these plans are in place and operating as intended and that all resources intended to support these plans are readily available to those who need them.
- Remind workers of the availability of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and other relevant resources and communicate to workers on how to access these services.
- Ensure when backfilling supervisory positions and operator positions that the person filling the position is trained and competent to undertake the role.
- Ensure that all resources are made available to complete work safely and as planned.

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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