

Safety training requirements for operators of opal mines

The Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014 (the Regulation) was amended on 13 April 2018 to set out safety training requirements for opal mine holders and operators. Safety training is facilitated by the NSW Resources Regulator and covers a range of safety matters specific to opal mining.

The mine holder (whether small claims title or prospecting licence) must notify the regulator of the operator for an opal mine before mining operations are carried out at the mine.

Training required for opal mine operators

Prior to the amendments, it was already a requirement to complete safety training (Safety Awareness Course and Mine Operators Workshop) to be an operator of an opal mine.

The Regulation amendment confirms the requirement for this training and introduces the requirement for operators to undertake additional safety training every five years. These requirements apply to all opal mine operators whether they are also the mine holder or another person appointed by the mine holder.

What if I am a current opal mine operator?

An individual who is an operator of an opal mine immediately before 13 April 2018 does not have to do anything immediately. The individual has until 13 April 2023 to complete refresher safety training.

What if I want to become an opal mine operator now and...

... I have completed safety awareness training and mine operators workshop within the last 5 years?

Individuals seeking to be an operator of an opal mine do not need to undergo further training immediately if they have completed both the safety awareness course and the mine operators workshop within the last 5 years. However, they must undertake the refresher safety training within 5 years of the date of their previous safety training.

... I am a mine holder who has completed the safety awareness course but not the mine operators workshop?

A mine holder of an opal mine, who is proposing to be the opal mine operator, must complete the safety awareness course and the mine operators workshop before carrying out mining operations at the opal mine.

If the mine holder completed the safety awareness course within the last 5 years, they must complete the mine operators workshop before carrying out mining operations at the opal mine as the operator.

If the mine holder completed the safety awareness course more than 5 years ago, they must complete both the safety awareness course and the mine operators workshop again before carrying out mining operations at the opal mine as the operator.

... I have never completed the safety awareness course or mine operators workshop (or completed the safety training more than 5 years ago)?

Individuals who have never completed the safety awareness course and mine operators workshop, or completed them more than 5 years ago and was not an operator immediately before 13 April 2018, must complete the safety awareness course and the mine operators workshop before carrying out operations at an opal mine as the operator.

Compulsory refresher training for opal mine operators

From 13 April 2018, a mine operator of an opal mine must undertake safety training at least once every five years. Existing operators before 13 April 2018 have until 12 April 2023 to complete this safety training. Further information in relation to the refresher safety training (five yearly safety training) will be provided when the training program becomes available from the Resources Regulator.

How to apply for training

Visit or call the Division of Resources and Geoscience Lightning Ridge office

Lot 60 Morilla St, Lightning Ridge NSW 2834

Phone: (02) 6820 5200 Email: lightningridge.office@planning.nsw.gov.au

On the department's website for the following:

- information on the safety training courses
<https://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/miners-and-explorers/applications-and-approvals/opal-mining/mining-course-information>
- access forms to apply for safety training
<https://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/miners-and-explorers/applications-and-approvals/opal-mining/opal-mining-forms>

and

NSW Resources Regulator

Phone: 1300 814 609 **Email:** resources.regulator@planning.nsw.gov.au

Postal: PO Box 344 Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310

Office: 516 High Street Maitland NSW 2320

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