

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

Metalliferous, Coal and Extractive Mines



**NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES**

April 2007

**NSW Department of Primary Industries
Mine Safety Operations
516 High Street Maitland NSW 2310
PO Box 344, Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310**

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

INTRODUCTION

The NSW Department of Primary Industries - Mine Safety has the responsibility of promoting high standards of safety within the NSW mining industry and ensuring compliance with legislation. This requires mines to manage their activities in such a manner as to identify and assess risk to the safety and health of persons at their mine and to deal with those risks on a priority basis.

The distribution of Safety Alerts to mine sites is a positive method of alerting operations of high-risk activities, and incidents which have occurred within industry. The departmental expectation is that each operation will utilise the information from every safety alert for the current and future safety of the operation. The safety alert issue process should prevent the recurrence of every high risk activity and incident, and ensure conformance with legislative requirements while meeting community expectations.

To achieve this outcome the department has developed this Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems. The department requests each mining operation use the checklist to assess the effectiveness of their system which is currently in place at the mine. The audit checklist will also be made available to industry on the department's web site, www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety as a pro-active step to assist mines in conducting internal audits of their Safety Alert management systems.

It is envisaged that mines will audit their Safety Alert system to identify the extent and effectiveness of their management systems, as well as identify any deficiencies or non-compliance. This should include developing corrective action plans to address any deficiencies or non-compliance identified during the audit process.

ABOUT THE AUDIT CHECKLIST FOR SAFETY ALERT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

1. The Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems has been designed as a tool to assist mining operations to conduct internal audits of the process followed upon receipt of a Safety Alert from the NSW Department of Primary Industries.
2. The checklist can be used to identify the current level of usefulness of Safety Alerts at a mine site through:
 - The evaluation of the effectiveness of the current safety alert management system in place at the mine.
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses
 - Provide the auditee with an opportunity to improve the safety alert management system in place at the mine

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

3. The checklist is laid out with a number of questions that may be asked by the internal auditor to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled. The notes in *Italics* below each question are for additional explanation as to the issue attempting to be addressed by the question.
4. The three columns headed **Doc, Int and Obs** refer to Documents, Interview and Observations respectively. A tick should be entered in the applicable column that supports the type of evidence supplied during the audit process ie if the evidence is obtained during an interview then the **Int** column should be ticked to show that the evidence obtained was obtained by interview.
5. The column headed **Audit Observations – Comments** is to be used by the internal auditor to record the audit results and evidence obtained during the audit process and to assist when writing up the audit report. This can include records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the audit criteria and are verifiable.
6. This audit document should be forwarded to the relevant mining inspector for consideration as to the effectiveness of your Safety Alert Management System.

The compilation of information contained in this document relies upon material and data derived from a number of third party sources and is intended as a guide only in devising risk and safety management systems for the working of mines and is not designed to replace or be used instead of an appropriately designed safety management plan for each individual mine. Users should rely on their own advice, skills and experience in applying risk and safety management systems in individual workplaces.

Use of this document does not relieve the user (or a person on whose behalf it is used) of any obligation or duty that might arise under any legislation (including the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2000, any other Act containing requirements relating to mine safety and any regulations and rules under those Acts) covering the activities to which this document has been or is to be applied.

The information in this document is provided voluntarily and for information purposes only. The New South Wales Government does not guarantee that the information is complete, current or correct and accepts no responsibility for unsuitable or inaccurate material that may be encountered.

Unless otherwise stated, the authorised version of all reports, guides, data and other information should be sourced from official printed versions of the agency directly. Neither the Department of Primary Industries, the New South Wales Government, nor any employee or agent of the Department, nor any author of or contributor to this document produced by the Department shall be responsible or liable for any loss, damage, personal injury or death howsoever caused. Users should always verify historical material by making and relying upon their own separate inquiries prior to making any important decisions or taking any action on the basis of this information.

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

No.	Evidence to be obtained to validate the implementation of a Safety Alert Management System	Doc	Int	Obs	Audit Observations - Comments
1.	<p>Does the mine have a documented system for the receipt and processing of Safety Alerts?</p> <p><i>Safety Alerts may require a complex process for the determination of relevance to the operations. The process may not be completed within a day, or by one person. For these reasons the process must be documented to determine the status of the safety alert as it passes from person to person, day by day.</i></p>				
2.	<p>Is the implementation of the Safety Alert process allocated to a position within the management structure of the mine.</p> <p><i>When the safety alert process is allocated to a person, and that employee is on leave, the assessment of the relevance of the Safety Alert should not be delayed till his return from leave.</i></p> <p><i>If the Safety Alert process is allocated to a position, the relevance process will be implemented by the person acting in that allocated position.</i></p>				
3.	<p>Whenever a safety alert is received, is an assessment of the “Relativity of the Safety Alert” to the operations, performed at the mine .</p> <p><i>Some safety alerts may be issued for specific mining operations, such as coal. The sand mining industry may not have that particular risk within their operation.</i></p>				

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

No.	Evidence to be obtained to validate the implementation of a Safety Alert Management System	Doc	Int	Obs	Audit Observations - Comments
4.	<p>Do persons competent in the topic of the safety alert perform the assessment of the “Relativity of the Safety Alert”?</p> <p><i>If the safety alert were issued on a topic related to electricity, the assessment of the relativity of the topic to the operation, should be performed by a person with electrical competence. Not only should the assessment be by an electrical person, but the level of knowledge and field of expertise within electricity should also be verified.</i></p>				
5.	<p>If the topic of the safety alert is assessed as “not relevant” to the operation, is there a documented process of that determination.</p> <p><i>A safety alert should not just be dismissed as not relevant. The decision making process and participants should be recorded.</i></p>				
6.	<p>Are all safety alerts entered into a register to allow re assessment of the topic, in the event of a change in process or apparatus at the operation</p> <p><i>The fact that a safety alert has been determined as not relevant does not mean that the topic of the safety alert will never be relevant. A change in process, machinery, manning or management may cause the topic to become relevant. This register would then allow the safety alert to be reviewed with respect to the changes in the operation.</i></p>				

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

No.	Evidence to be obtained to validate the implementation of a Safety Alert Management System	Doc	Int	Obs	Audit Observations - Comments
7.	<p>Is the documented process for the receipt of safety alerts audited at a predetermined frequency.</p> <p><i>Australian standards for document control require reviews at determined frequencies.</i></p>				
8.	<p>If the topic of the safety alert is assessed as “Relevant”, is a risk assessment of the existing controls and barriers performed to determine if a higher level of the hierarchy of controls is required?</p> <p><i>The topic of the safety alert may identify hazards which were not considered when the initial risk assessment at your site was performed.</i></p>				
9.	<p>Are the recommendations of the safety alert implemented.</p> <p><i>Consider the legal and moral issues of non compliance with recommendations of a safety alert.</i></p>				

Audit Checklist for Safety Alert Management Systems

No.	Evidence to be obtained to validate the implementation of a Safety Alert Management System	Doc	Int	Obs	Audit Observations - Comments
10.	Is the risk assessment performed to a society standard.				
11.	Have MDG 1010 and 1014 been implemented				
12.	Are the process and results of the Risk Assessment documented.				
13.	Does the Risk Assessment contain:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context • Scope • Team members • Likelihood • Consequence • Hierarchy of controls 				

Feedback Sheet

Your comments will be very helpful in reviewing and improving this Safety Alert Management Systems – Self Audit Checklist.

Please copy and complete the Feedback Sheet and return it to:

*North East Area Manager
Mine Safety Operations
NSW Department of Primary Industries
PO Box 344
Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310
Fax: (02) 4931 6626
Phone: (02) 4931 6790*

How did you use, or intend to use, this document?

What do you find most useful about this document?

What do you find least useful?

Do you have any suggested changes to the document?

Thank you for completing and returning this Feedback Sheet.