

Safety bulletin

Mines Inspectorate

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Resuming operations after severe weather

The current severe weather conditions have resulted in a number of high potential incidents when operations have restarted. Queensland mining safety and health legislation requires that potential hazards be identified and suitable controls established to deal with the hazards.

Early last year I asked you to review the change management procedures in place at your mine. Restarting mining operations after the amount of recent wet weather is a change management issue, e.g. the nature of a waste dump is likely to have changed.

At least three trucks and one bull dozer have been affected by slumping at the edge of a tip.



The effect of large volumes of rain on a tip requires a change management process involving appropriately qualified people. For an Open Cut Examiner to make effective inspections, he may need advice from geologists and / or civil or geotechnical engineers.

Each truck involved in a reported slump was a new generation, high capacity unit. Understandably these trucks are preferred when available and when, for operational reasons, only part of a mine's fleet can be used. However, in assessing the preferred truck also consider whether lower capacity trucks would be preferable in some circumstances.

Other areas where change has been identified at some mines include:

- Reduction in the width of roadways
- Damage to road surfaces
- Slippery road conditions
- Strata failure of high and low walls.

When hazards are identified, it is important that the controls are specific, suitable and communicated well. At one mine, after a truck approached an edge which had slumped, the

decision was made to "dump short." The actual process was left to the discretion of the truck driver and within twenty four hours on the same tip another truck was affected by a slump while dumping 5 metres from the edge of the tip.

The changes affecting safety and health of coal mine workers are not restricted to heavy machinery. There has been a reported snake bite and a red back spider bite in work areas, probably due to the vermin seeking dryer locations. Please ensure your personnel are safe during these challenging times.

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Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

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Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety bulletin. Any such advice supplied to site should reach those who require it, and it should also be placed on the mine noticeboards.

See more Safety alerts and Safety bulletins at
www.dme.qld.gov.au/mines/safety_information___bulletins.cfm