

SB17-06 October 2017

Safety helmets – effective working life

This safety bulletin provides information on a serious incident and safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

The issue

Safety helmets have an effective working life from the date of issue. Certain factors will influence the effective working life of safety helmets.

Some safety helmets have a date of manufacture embossed on the underside of the brim. All compliant safety helmets have a label on the inside of the shell with important manufacturer warning advice and a label with space to record the date of issue.

Figure 1: A safety helmet.



Figure 2: Label on the inside of a safety helmet.



Circumstances

This Safety Bulletin has been issued to replace *SA06-02 Hard hat expiry date*. The NSW Resources Regulator recognises that the effective working life of a safety helmet will depend on several factors. Australian Standard *AS/NZS 1800:1998 Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use* (section 3) states that 'field tests indicate that generally, helmet shells have a life of at least three years. Damage to the harness components may deteriorate more rapidly in service and therefore should be replaced at intervals no longer than two years'.

It notes that helmets used infrequently, stored away from sunlight, dirt and extreme temperatures may not find this guideline / recommendation applicable. Conversely, poorly stored helmets used in extreme conditions of temperature, may need replacing more frequently'.

Recommendations

Safety helmets require specific inspection, maintenance and cleaning to remain an effective personal protection equipment (PPE). Australian Standard *AS/NZS 1800:1998 Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use* (section 3) includes information on cleaning, inspection and maintenance. Manufacturer's information, printed on the label on the inside of the shell, specifies particular safety warning advice that should also be followed.

It is recommended that mine operators adopt a risk management approach, one that is also consistent with *AS/NZS 1800:1998 Occupational protective helmets – Selection, care and use*, and the printed manufacturer's safety warnings. This will ensure that workers issued with safety helmets or hard hats, remain protected.

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this compliance alert, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This compliance alert should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board. Go to resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/safety to

- find more safety alerts and bulletins
- use our searchable safety database
- sign up to receive mine safety news.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information on which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Planning and Environment or the user's independent advisor.

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