

Site-specific oral exam not specific enough - MinEx

Cameron Massey - Tue, 14 Aug 2018

MinEx has drawn to the attention of WorkSafe what it believes are flaws in the newly gazetted requirements for site-specific Certificates of Competence.

As well as the five compulsory and one optional unit standard to complete, the manager of the quarrying operation specified in the certificate must demonstrate practical experience, hold a current first aid certificate and pass an oral examination.

However, an applicant who holds a site-specific CoC and applies for another site-specific CoC will not need to sit another oral examination.

MinEx chief executive Wayne Scott says while this will make it easier for quarry managers needing to move from site to site, the freshly granted site-specific CoC will not reflect the conditions of the new operation and goes against “the whole site-specific logic”.

He says because the site-specific CoC unit standards are generic, the only opportunity for determining if an applicant is competent is through the oral exam.

Scott believes WorkSafe wanted the site-specific CoC to fit the current oral exam structure, which is three examiners and an adjudicator.

MinEx previously made a submission to the Board of Examiners that the site-specific oral exam should be held on the site in question by a recognised industry peer or a single member of the Board of Examiners, he says.

“It would then be easy to do it again if the applicant moves to a new site. That way it will be truly site-specific.”

Quarry conditions

WorkSafe says the inclusion of site-specific requirements meets the need of small, low risk quarries.

Key amendments included in the notice give a clearer definition of ‘workings’, which impacts on the experience required for various CoCs. It also outlines the specific unit standards required for a First Aid certificate.

In order to apply for a site-specific CoC, the operation must have no more than four workers, including the applicant, ordinarily working at the site, and no explosives are to be used.

Any tip head or stockpiles at the operation must be less than five metres high, and excavations no more than five metres deep.

The quarry must be operating for a period or periods that total at least 24 months and its actual processing rate must be no more than an average of 1,000 tonnes per week.

The criteria also include no voids or underground workings and no work is to be carried out underwater.

