

TARGETED AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Heavy vehicle incidents – Surface coal and metalliferous mines



During the first three months of 2021 the NSW Resources Regulator noted a concerning increase in incident notifications in the coal and metalliferous sectors involving heavy mining equipment and other mobile vehicles. In some cases, these incidents either resulted in serious injuries or had the potential to fatally injure workers.

Following investigations into each incident, the causation was often attributed to the failure of workers to follow the policies or procedures that are implemented at the mine. Fundamental practices such as positive communication, obeying traffic rules, driving to conditions, and basic hazard awareness were repeatedly highlighted as a contributing factor.

To counter this, the NSW Resources Regulator announced a targeted awareness campaign to focus on heavy vehicle interaction. This campaign was concentrated on all active surface coal operations and a selection of surface and underground metalliferous operations in NSW. The intention for this campaign was for inspectors to brief individual crews at each site on the risks involved, as well the responsibility of workers.

Over a 10-day period in May 2021, inspectors delivered [presentations](#) to 256 work crews across 27 surface coal mines. In total, the importance of managing vehicle interaction risks was highlighted to approximately 10,700 workers within the open-cut coal industry.

Similarly, inspectors delivered [presentations](#) to 67 work crews across a combination of ten surface and underground metalliferous mines. This same message was conveyed to approximately 2,700 workers within the metalliferous industry.

The campaign has been well received by industry participants and has generated detailed, but necessary, discussions within the workplaces visited. The importance of workers understanding and maintaining controls for vehicle interaction is paramount in managing the risks for roads or other vehicle operating areas. For this reason, mine operators should review their safety management systems to ensure there are properly implemented verification processes in place to assist supervisors and workers to monitor and maintain effective risk controls.

“I’m passionate about the safety of people within our business, and I was pleased to support the Resources Regulator coming out to site to present some raw truths of what happens in our industry if we fail to follow the safety procedures. The Regulator presented powerful and passionate messages on managing the controls for the risk of vehicle interaction and I heard good feedback from my crews as they discussed the messages through the days following.”

Mining Engineering Manager (Open cut coal mine – Hunter Valley region)

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