

Safety Bulletin

December 2022

Wet weather to continue

This safety bulletin provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Outlook

After consistent heavy rain and flooding throughout 2022, continued rainfall is forecast through summer into 2023. During 2022, mines across NSW were directly and indirectly impacted by flooding, water inflows, loss of mine access and impacts on workers' ability to access the mines. These impacts should be factored into risk assessments, procedures and training and not normalised as part of mining operations.

Mine operators should review their emergency management plans and preparations leading into Christmas, shutdown periods and periods of high annual leave.

Forecast

This month, the Bureau of Meteorology forecast the following for NSW:

- Above median rainfall with continued wet outlook due to La Nina.
- Warmer maximum temperatures than the long-term median.
- Warmer minimum temperatures than the long-term median.

Refer to the Bureau of Meteorology's website for additional information on the [climate outlook overview](#).

Risks

With continued adverse weather likely, mine operators need to consider a range of conditions that may impact the health and safety of workers. This includes:

- flooding and flood water impacts, factoring in ground saturation and mine water levels
- storms and high winds
- extreme heat
- grass fires due to high fuel loads and summer heat
- flooding impacting emergency services ability to respond to incidents.

Recommendations

Mine operators should review their emergency preparedness and risk controls leading into summer and the Christmas period. Factors to consider include:

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- current hazards at the mine such as water accumulation and storage levels and fuel loads for grass fires
- reviewing response capabilities, considering worker annual leave impacts and supplier shutdown periods
- reviewing systems in place to manage workers' exposure to heat stress, including worker awareness to symptoms and how to respond
- updating emergency plans with any changes to infrastructure or mine access
- considering impacts on communication systems from weather events
- reviewing the adequacy of trigger action response plans (TARPs) related to the stability of highwalls, extraction areas and water storage walls
- impacts of wet weather on blasting and explosives storage and activities
- considering the effects of weather events on access and electricity supply on remote mine infrastructure
- weather and heat factors when planning and scheduling work.

Note: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this safety alert and are informed of its content and recommendations. This safety 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 common area, such as your notice board where appropriate.

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