

# **Compliance priority report**

## Hazard reporting of safety-related issues – surface and underground coal mines

*June 2022 – November 2022*

**Published by the Department of Regional NSW**

Title: Compliance priority report

Subtitle: Hazard reporting of safety related issues – Surface & Underground Coal Mines

First published: February 2023

Department reference number: RDOC23/5685

Amendment schedule		
Date	Version	Amendment
February 2023	1.0	First published

© State of New South Wales through Regional NSW 2023. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute Regional NSW as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a department website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (January 2023) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including Regional NSW), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

# Table of Contents

Executive summary .....	4
Key findings .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Further information.....	5

## Executive summary

A crucial part of the NSW Resources Regulator's *Incident Prevention Strategy* involves compliance priority programs for mines and petroleum sites. This involves proactively assessing a topic that is an emerging risk across the industry, that is driven primarily from incident data as well as evolving industry trends. Although these topics may also be contained within the Resources Regulator planned inspection programs, the aim of compliance priority programs is to gather further information and knowledge about how the industry is managing and controlling a specific issue.

The intent of this program was to assess worker knowledge of incident and hazard reporting systems, and whether these systems effectively facilitated feedback to people who raised safety concerns.

This report summarises the assessment findings from the compliance priority program which targeted hazard reporting safety related issues and covered 24 surface mines and 18 underground mines during the period from June 2022 to November 2022. Several key elements were assessed as part of this program and included:

- systems to report safety hazards and suggest safety improvements
- level of encouragement for workers to use the system
- how actions arising from reported issues are recorded and monitored through to completion
- feedback processes to persons who initially raise hazards or improvements
- using such systems by workers.

## Key findings

Results from the hazard reporting assessment program indicate a majority of mines could demonstrate a robust system for:

- reporting safety hazards and suggested safety improvements
- encouraging workers to use the safety hazards reporting system
- recording actions raised and monitored through to completion
- giving feedback to originator
- workers using the system.

Improvement opportunities were identified at 5 mines, while the remaining 37 mining operations were assessed as having robust systems in place.

Not providing adequate feedback to workers was identified as the most significant issue, followed by enhancements to systems for reporting safety hazards and suggestions for safety improvements.

## Recommendations

During this assessment, many mine operators reported an increase in worker turnover as being a major issue. To counter this, mine operators should ensure that training and induction processes appropriately cover hazard reporting systems, and that ongoing refresher training is also provided

Some mines have an opportunity to improve their systems regarding:

- having a system in place to report hazards and potential safety improvements
- encouraging workers to use the hazard reporting system
- providing feedback and monitor actions recorded to correct the hazard or incident reported by workers.

- providing feedback in a timely manner directly to the person who raised the incident or hazard report.
- ensuring workers and supervisors use the system.

Mine operators should continually monitor the utilisation of hazard reporting systems to verify they are effective, and should also verify that workers and supervisors understand the importance of recording hazards, regardless of whether they are immediately rectified, to allow for proper analysis of the prevalence and nature of hazards. This in turn will facilitate the ability to systematically eliminate hazards, rather than continuously taking remedial action to address the same hazard.

## Further information

For more information on safety assessment programs, the findings outlined in this report, or other mine safety information, please contact the NSW Resources Regulator:

CONTACT TYPE	CONTACT DETAILS
Email	<a href="mailto:cau@regional.nsw.gov.au">cau@regional.nsw.gov.au</a>
Incident reporting	To report an incident or injury call 1300 814 609 or log in to the <a href="#">Regulator Portal</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/">www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au/</a>
Address	NSW Resources Regulator 516 High Street Maitland NSW 2320