

March 2023

Examiners' report

Open cut examiner of coal mines other than underground coal mines certificate of competence

Examiners' report 2022 – 2023

Written examination

OCE1 – Legislation

Summary of results and general comments

Exam date: 8 June 2022

Number of candidates: 36

Number who passed: 24

Highest mark: 81%

Average mark: 60%

Lowest mark: 39%

Question 1 (total of 25 marks) Hazard Management

Highest mark: 24

Average mark: 18

Lowest mark: 12

Examiners' comments:

- There were good responses showing an acceptable knowledge of hazards and controls from a legislative perspective.
- There were good examples of applying PHMP knowledge into a practical application in part b)
- In Part c), some candidates did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the matters that must be considered in developing the control measures to manage the risks of roads or other vehicle operating areas. Some candidates relied on a summary acronym approach which gave little or no context.

Question 2 (total of 25 marks) Incident Response

Highest mark: 24

Average mark: 17

Lowest mark: 8

Examiners' comments:

- Candidates who performed well were able to apply legislative requirements to a practical mining incident scenario.

- Candidates are reminded to ensure the communication to current crew/oncoming OCE, and crew requirements are not omitted in their responses.
- Incident site disturbance requirements were generally well known.

Question 3 (total of 25 marks) Explosives

Highest mark: 22

Average mark: 15

Lowest mark: 8

Examiners' comments:

- The knowledge of the legislative requirements dealing with explosives was mixed amongst candidates.
- Candidates who performed well were able to effectively apply legislative requirements to the practical scenarios in c) and e).

Question 4 (total of 25 marks) Health and Safety Representatives

Highest mark: 17

Average mark: 10

Lowest mark: 3

Examiners' comments:

- Overall, the knowledge of the legislative requirements in relation to Health & Safety Representatives (HSRs), particularly their powers & functions and inspections of the workplace was inadequate. Knowledge of the Health and Safety Committee (HSCs) was also lacking.
- OCE candidates are reminded that HSR's and HSC's have a role in managing health and safety at a mine site and within the teams, an OCE may be responsible for and interact with.

OCE2 – Practical Open Cut Operations

Summary of results and general comments

Exam date: 8 June 2022

Number of candidates: 42

Number who passed: 13

Highest mark: 86.0%

Average mark: 54.5%

Lowest mark: 36.5%

Question 1 (total 50 marks) Mining Practice

Highest mark: 43

Average mark: 27

Lowest mark: 17

Examiners' comments:

- Some candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge regarding stockpile management and train loader operations. Candidates would benefit from visits to CHPP's and explore information in the SMS including past incidents documentation associated with stockpiles and spontaneous combustion management.

- There was a varied knowledge of hazards and controls associated with product coal stockpiles. Of note was the limited controls nominated. Candidates are reminded to consider the full range of controls available to manage hazards.
- Candidates are reminded to carefully read the question before answering.
- In Part c), some candidates failed to identify the incident as notifiable and did not isolate.
- In Part d), the successful candidates in this question identified the incident as notifiable and isolated appropriately.

Question 2 (total 50 marks) Incident Management

Highest mark: 44

Average mark: 25

Lowest mark: 14

Examiners' comments:

- It was evident that some candidates did not provide responses in line with what the question was asking. Candidates must ensure time is taken to carefully read the question to enable them to provide an accurate response
- Some candidates failed to take the appropriate action to manage the situation safely and effectively. It appeared that some candidates lacked the knowledge required or left out key steps to ensure the incident was managed to the standard required.
- The incident investigation responses were lacking in many candidate responses. The investigation process adopted, involvement, sources of information used to determine contributing factors and root causes to prevent reoccurrence were either not provided or lacking in numerous responses.

Question 3 (total 50 marks) Explosives and shot firing (E&S)

Highest mark: 43

Average mark: 34

Lowest mark: 9

Examiners' comments:

- This question received the highest average mark
- Those with solid base E&S knowledge excelled in this question.
- A good observation included some good quality diagrams illustrating the recommended load profile.
- Some candidates lacked knowledge and would benefit from visits to operations conducting in through seam blasting.
- Observations showed some candidates struggled in identifying steps to be taken and the controls required to safely prepare and initiate the submerged shot. Some candidates failed to conduct a risk assessment. Candidates are encouraged to ensure a risk management process is adopted to determine the steps required.

Question 4 (total of 50 marks) Contractor management

Highest mark: 42

Average mark: 23

Lowest mark: 5

Examiners' comments:

- Whilst most candidates were familiar with the legislative requirements for introducing contractors at a mine site, some candidates failed to practically outline a robust plan for integrating a contractor haulage company. Consultation with relevant stakeholders should always be undertaken when undergoing change management.
- With regards to the incident scenario, some candidates failed to recognise the risk to health and safety of persons involved and incorrectly categorised the incident under legislation. Candidates were also unfamiliar with direct control measures to review following the incident. Such control measures should be front of mind when conducting the duties of an open cut examiner and/or managing contractors.

Oral examination

Date: 9 August 2022

Number of candidates: 27

Number deemed competent: 14

Examiners' comments:

- Some candidates needed too much prompting, particularly when asked about certain hazards in the various scenarios
- Candidates who struggled in managing emergency situations lacked leadership, situational awareness, and resource management.
- Some candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge to either determine what was a notifiable incident or differentiate between a cl128 vs cl179 incident, which significantly impacted their response.
- There was a lack of decision making and decisiveness (ANTS) with several candidates changing their responses, some multiple times, throughout the question.
- A risk-based approach to handling tasks was lacking in unsuccessful candidates when dealing with abnormal situations.
- A structured approach to responses was lacking in some candidates (scatter gun approach). Structure does not mean reciting the Nertney Wheel or Ten Hurdles.
- Some candidates prepared well through mock orals and site visits, while others did not appear to have been to many (if any) other operations or visited sites involved with high-risk tasks e.g. tailings dam capping.
- Successful candidates could accurately step through the process of raising an emergency and were able to manage emergency situations effectively, use available resources without putting anyone at risk and effectively recover persons/casualty in an incident situation.
- Knowledge of scene preservation requirements was strong across in many candidates.
- Candidates deemed competent appeared to have made a concerted effort to broaden their skills and knowledge of other operations apart from their own.
- Other suggested areas for improvement.
 - Gain a good understanding of legislation and how to apply it practically on the job – conduct workplace inspections with OCE's and or Manager to learn what they look for and understand what is good.
 - Gain a better understanding of emergency management and resource management during an emergency event – review weekly incident summary and go through how they would manage the incident as though it had happened on their watch.
 - During site visits ask about recent incidents, how they were managed, what worked well and what areas could improve and discuss any learnings.

Post Oral examination

Date: 15 February 2023

Number of candidates: 8

Number deemed competent: 5

Examiners' comments

- A number of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of:
 - emergency procedures including scene preservation, emergency management requirements
 - Section 190 Dangerous incidents
 - Section 39 Inspections and Section 88 Inspection plans including practical application of workplace inspections
 - Tailings dam capping requirements and HRA approvals process
 - Providing a well-structured and practical approach to managing emergency scenarios
- Some candidates were lacking in:
 - Evidence of site visits to other operations. Candidates are encouraged to visit other sites in preparation for examinations.
 - Adequate knowledge of reporting requirements for incidents (particularly with reference to recent legislation changes)
 - Effective management of contractors and were reliant of someone else doing that work for them i.e. they are a maintenance responsibility not mine.
- Some candidates required frequent prompting for identifying prominent hazards when given a scenario which demonstrated a lack of understanding and poor situational awareness.

More information

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Acknowledgments

Open cut examiner of coal mines other than underground coal mines examination panel

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