

# Rogue small quarries must shape up or be shut down

The quarry industry and its health and safety organisation want a tougher approach taken this year to small quarries that continue to flout health and safety regulations.

Aggregate and Quarry Association chair Brian Roche says his organisation has 53 members producing around 85% of the rock and stone material used in New Zealand roads and buildings as well as fertiliser such as lime.

"Most of our members have got up to speed with the new and tougher requirements that came into force in the wake of the Pike River disaster which exposed light regulation across the whole extractive sector.

"However, our membership only covers a couple of hundred quarry sites across the country. We know there are around 1100 quarry sites nationally, many of them on remote rural properties."

The Health and Safety Council for the mining and quarrying sector (MinEx) says many small quarries are still refusing to implement new requirements for Certificates of Competence (CoCs) and these present the highest level of risks to operator and worker safety. A quarry manager is required to have a CoC with relevant training to meet requirements for safe supervision of a quarrying operation.

MinEx CEO Wayne Scott says he's been visiting small sites since taking on the job seven months ago and while some welcome his advice, others are trying to stay below the radar.

"WorkSafe has clearly stated that enforcement action will be taken for those who fail to comply with legislation, so my message to unregistered quarries is to contact me and let me help get sites up to speed, as the alternative may be getting shut down.

"What's even worse, is that the longer small quarries operate without health and safety requirements in place, the more risk they create of serious injuries or fatalities. We saw four deaths in quarries in 2015 – three in small quarries without appropriate requirements in place – and we don't want another year like that."

MinEx's briefing late last year to Parliamentarians and officials called for reforms in the training required for Certificates of Competence and the recruitment of more specialist inspectors for quarries and mines.

**It's not major, regulated operations like this one that are the likely cause of H+S risks – but smaller 'under the radar' sites.**

