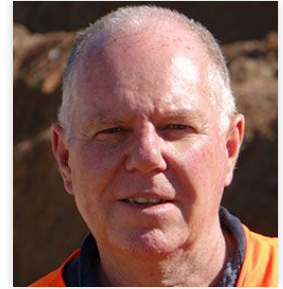


Health and safety requirements about to change

Colin Williscroft - Tue, 14 Jun 2022

New health and safety regulations for quarries and mines will come into force next month, MinEx says.

Chief executive Wayne Scott says the changes are proportional to the size, nature and complexity of different operations, so what might be required for large mines is not required for small quarries, and vice versa.



Changes

The amendments, some of which come into force next month, include extending several obligations, which previously only applied to underground mining operations, to quarries and alluvial mines.

They align offences and penalties for the new obligations on quarries and alluvial mines with those that apply to underground mines.

Other changes provide for a lower-level certificate of competence if there are no more than four workers in an operation, although requirements are different when explosives are involved.

The roles of managers or supervisors in mines or quarries are clarified and a gas monitor role to monitor for methane when coal mining is being introduced.

WorkSafe reporting requirements have also been changed.

The regulations also make a variety of technical amendments, which are designed to ensure that the regulations work proportionately for different types of mining and quarrying operations.

Timeframe

The amended [regulations](#) will come into force in four parts, the first of which is on 18 July, with the next three on the same day in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

The initial changes provide the legislative framework for improved health and safety, particularly in smaller mines and quarries.

Scott says the staged implementation will allow sites to meet requirements that may take time to achieve.

He says all sites will be required to have a documented health and safety plan by 18 July 2023 and MinEx has examples and templates available for sites to use.

WorkSafe has already started delivering workshops around the country on the new regulations, which will run until the end of June.

Both WorkSafe inspectors and MinEx are available to assist operators.

The Institute of Quarrying is holding one-hour [webinars](#) on the new regulations on 22 June, starting at 9am and noon.

Fit for purpose

Scott, who represented the extractives sector in discussions with WorkSafe and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment over the amended regulations, says most of the issues that the sector wanted to be addressed have been.

"I think the regulations are practical, fit-for-purpose and address the genuine health and safety needs of the sector. While it has taken some time, MBIE officials have done a good job."

The regulations were initially prompted by the Pike River mine tragedy in 2010.

The government of the day brought in new health and safety regulations in 2013 but then acknowledged that quarries, opencast mines and alluvial mines needed fit-for-purpose regulations.

Successive ministers have promised to advance new regulations since then.