
Quarry inspectors needed

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The mining industry's health and safety body MinEx has called for WorkSafe to employ more specialist quarry inspectors to ensure adequate monitoring of safety, and the compulsory Certificate of Competency process.

Under the HSW (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016, all quarry managers are required to hold current CoCs. However new figures provided to Safeguard by WorkSafe show that at the beginning of this month 288 managers – or 27% of the 1051 known to WorkSafe – did not have them.

Of these, the majority were said to be either working towards a CoC, or waiting to re-sit the certification exam after a previous failure. However a small, but unspecified, number of them have apparently not yet attempted to achieve certification.

MinEx CEO Wayne Scott told Safeguard that during his seven months with the organisation he has visited a lot of quarries to discuss the CoC process, and has, for the most part, received a very positive response.

"However you've got a handful of people who are deliberately not complying with the legislation, and unfortunately the net result is that they could be putting people at risk," he says. "It's generally small quarries on private land, often in very remote places, and because WorkSafe has only four quarry inspectors, it's problematic for them to get to some of these far-flung places on a regular basis."

In a briefing to government late last year MinEx called for more quarry inspectors to be recruited to help address this issue.

WorkSafe's position paper on CoCs states that sites without a suitably qualified manager will be served an improvement notice, allowing them to continue operating for up to a year while the manager achieves certification.

In 2017 quarry inspectors issued 36 improvement notices for CoC non-compliance, but WorkSafe says that no sites have yet been shut down, by way of prohibition notice, solely for CoC-related issues, although "some sites have been closed for multiple health and safety issues that included no CoC holder."

- In early January WorkSafe's chief inspector extractives Mark Pizey left the organisation and Safeguard understands he has not yet been replaced.

People Mentioned: Wayne Scott; Mark Pizey

Organisations Mentioned: MinEx

Topic: Safeguard Update

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