

Regs consultation period extended

Cameron Massey - Thu, 16 Aug 2018

The consultation period for feedback on amending the new mining and quarrying regulations has been extended one month.

In an email sent today, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment says the extractives sector has requested more time to consider the proposals. Resourcing pressures that MBIE is facing have also led to the extension.



Submissions are now due 28 September. MBIE says any resulting changes are now likely to be agreed by mid-2019.

Iain Lees-Galloway, the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, wanted to have the new Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations in place by the end of the year.

MinEx chief executive Wayne Scott hopes the just announced extension will not lead to any substantial delays in that timeframe. He says MinEx was prepared to submit its feedback by the initial deadline of this Friday.

Quarry specific regs

Following comprehensive industry consultation, MinEx is proposing that a separate section containing quarry-specific regulations be added to the regulations.

Amongst the proposed additions include the requirement for a Health and Safety Management System or Safety Plan.

Scott says the plan must take account of the size, nature and complexity of the site, and must include risk management.

“For simple operations the system should be simple to understand, small and relevant to the operation.”

This would mean no requirement for Principal Hazard Management Plans nor will any quarry be required to have a Senior Site Executive. The HSMS would be developed by the operator, and or the owner, and implemented and maintained by the certificate of competence holder.

Inoperative sites

MinEx is also proposing that quarries not winning or processing material, or that have stopped winning or processing material, be classified as ‘dormant quarries’. Scott says these sites would be exempt from the regulations.

He gives the example of a council-owned quarry where a contractor is employed only to blast and crush road base and then stockpile it. Once stockpiled and the contractor leaves the site, this will become a dormant quarry.

“Such sites will be required to notify WorkSafe that they are now dormant quarries.”

MinEx suggests that quarries will be required to report notifiable incidents to WorkSafe and complete a quarterly statistical report to WorkSafe.

Means of egress

As previously reported, Scott has issue with the regulations requiring underground metalliferous mines to have two exits ‘trafficable on foot’.

He says metalliferous mines don’t carry with them the same levels of risk as underground coal mines where methane explosions are a real consideration.

Scott suggests having a second means of egress that is trafficable on foot is superfluous to an underground non-coal mining operation.

“Typically, a lot of underground metalliferous operations work off a single drive and shafts - which are used for ventilation and as a second means of egress.”

The operators in New Zealand are as safe as any underground metalliferous mines elsewhere in the world operating under similar legislation, he says.