



INFORMATION SHEET

Overview of the mine safety management system code of practice

The Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 (WHS Mines Regulations) provide a duty for the mine operator to establish and implement a mine safety management system (MSMS). The MSMS is a framework that brings together the mine's policies, systems, procedures and plans to enable a mine operator to ensure the safe operation of a mine.

Identifying hazards

Identifying hazards can be achieved by dividing operations or systems into groups. Identifying hazards should account for workplaces, work processes, substances, plant and equipment, how work is organised, managed, carried out and how changes may occur.

Assessing the risks

In assessing risks, the mine operator should consider the nature of the hazard or risk, likelihood of the hazard or risk causing harm, possible severity of the harm, and the state of knowledge (what the industry knows) about the hazard or risk and how to eliminate or minimise them.

Managing the risks

Managing risk involves eliminating the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. If this is not able to be done, the risk must be minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable, by the use of effective controls that are based upon the hierarchy of control. The MSMS should contain reference to any design principles, engineering standards and technical standards relied upon for control measures.

Content of MSMS

The detail on each element of the MSMS will depend on the nature, complexity and stage of the mining operations and the associated risks. As a minimum, the content must set out:

- a description of the current mining operations, covering the location of mining operations, the nature and size of the mine, and its complexity (e.g. underground or open pit; any processing operations involved)

- the mine operator's health and safety policy, which is their commitment and approach to health and safety, and must include the broad aims in relation to the safe operation of the mine
- a description of the identified hazards, and the systems, procedures and plans used to manage the risks posed by those hazards
- management plans that must be included within the MSMS, including:
 - principal mining hazard management plans (PMHMP)
 - health management plan
 - emergency plan
 and if applicable:
 - a radiation management plan
 - a radioactive waste management plan
 - an underground ventilation control plan
- the management and supervisory structure of those responsible for the health and safety of workers and others at the mine, including statutory positions
- mandatory controls for monitoring in accordance with the WHS Mines Regulations as part of the risk management processes – for example, air quality, ground movement, plant and machinery, excessive noise, vibration, poor visibility, dark and confined working conditions, exposure to hazardous chemicals or radiation, worker fatigue, and consumption of alcohol by workers
- health monitoring to workers if there is an identified risk of an adverse effect on the worker's health because of exposure to a hazard – health monitoring is required to be carried out for identified exposure to, asbestos, hazardous chemicals, such as nickel, cobalt, arsenic, silica, lead, and where health is likely to be affected by mining operations
- procedures for notifiable and reportable incident reporting, response and investigation
- how documents, including the mine record, will be kept as well as arrangements for the management of those records and documents to ensure compliance with the various duties under the WHS legislation
- arrangements for the management of change within the mining operations – this must include implementing methods to identify material changes in working conditions, systems of work and resources that may pose a risk to workers.

Consultation

The mine operator must implement processes for:

- consultation with workers in accordance with the requirements of the WHS legislation, including:
 - if requested, the election of health and safety representatives (HSRs)
 - mechanisms for worker consultation
 - identifying PMHs and other hazards
 - providing input on the appropriate risk control measures for PMHs, other hazards, control plans and procedures
 - providing input on the MSMS and its review
- how health and safety information is communicated across shifts, rosters or at the time of handover between workers, supervisors and other relevant persons
- communication with other persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) to ensure their work continues to be coordinated so as not to give rise to any WHS issues and that each is able to fulfil their duties under the WHS legislation.

Training

The MSMS must include arrangements for the provision of information, training and instructions regarding the nature of the work, the risks associated with the work and the required control measures, including induction procedures for workers (general and site-specific) appropriate to the tasks that the worker will perform.

Contractor safety management

If a contractor is working at a mine, the mine operator must include in the MSMS control measures that will be used to control risks to health and safety associated with the contractor's work.

A contractor may operate at a mine under the MSMS of the mine operator or under the contractor's own health and safety management plan. If the contractor finds its arrangements are consistent with the mine's MSMS, then the contractor must notify the mine operator in writing of this to indicate they will use the MSMS when working at the mine.

The contractor may operate under its own health and safety management plan if it has the resources and capability to do so, and the plan is accepted in writing by the mine operator.

How to implement the mine safety management system

In order to implement the MSMS, the mine operator needs to ensure that what is set out in the MSMS is followed in practice. The MSMS should be integrated with other management systems and practices, and adequate resources need to be provided for implementation of the MSMS.

Implementation of mine safety management system

Monitoring of mining operations is necessary to ensure that what is planned in the MSMS is implemented in practice. Feedback from ongoing assessment and regular inspections should be provided to the mine operator so that steps can be taken to correct any issues that are impeding implementation.

These arrangements must be described in the MSMS and should include:

- specific and general control measures needed for the workplace such as monitoring of plant, workings and air quality
- monitoring strategies to verify the effectiveness of critical controls
- auditing and reviewing relevant activities.

Review of the mine safety management system

Once the MSMS is in place, it must be reviewed under certain circumstances. These may include a simple review of the relevant parts of the management system following:

- a notifiable incident, reportable incident
- an audit of the MSMS indicates a deficiency in a control measure
- a significant change in the mining operation.

If it is a new mine, the MSMS must be reviewed within 12 months of operations commencing.

The MSMS should be fully reviewed at least once every three years and as necessary to ensure it remains effective.

Ensuring the mine safety management system is effective

A mine operator must have a procedure for measuring how the mine's MSMS is performing against set performance standards, and a system for auditing to ensure the MSMS remains effective. The MSMS for a mine must include the following:

- performance standards for measuring the effectiveness of all aspects of the MSMS
- a system for auditing the effectiveness of the MSMS against the performance standards, including the methods, frequency and results of the audit process.