



Mining & Quarrying
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE

Withdrawal of Workers to Safety Guide

Promoting Work Health and Safety in the Workplace

The South Australian Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Promoting Work Health and Safety in the Workplace

This workplace industry safety resource is developed and fully funded by the Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee (MAQOHSC).

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Contents

AIM.....	2
Introduction	2
1. When to withdraw workers?	3
2. Identifying potential scenarios.....	3
3. Risk Management.....	4
4. Preparing procedures	4
5. Information, training and instruction	4
6. Review.....	4
FURTHER ASSISTANCE.....	5
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.....	5
REFERENCES.....	5

Withdrawal of Workers to Safety Guide

AIM

The aim of this Guidance Material is to provide Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) with practical guidance on the legislative requirement of withdrawing workers (inclusive of contractors and visitors) to a place of safety when required.

Introduction

Due to the nature, location and the environment of mining and quarrying operations, there are hazards and risks present that, at times, will require workers to be withdrawn to a place of safety.

The *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA) Regulation 622(1h)* states:

1. *The safety management system document for a mine must set out the following:*
 - h. the procedures and conditions under which persons at the mine or a part of the mine are to be withdrawn to a place of safety and to remain withdrawn as a precautionary measure where risk to health and safety warrants withdrawal.*

1. When to withdraw workers?

As stated in the introduction, due to the nature location and environmental conditions of mining and quarrying operations, there are often hazards and risks to workers health and safety that will require them to be withdrawn to a place of safety.

Some examples of potential scenarios that would require workers to be withdrawn to a place of safety include:

- During blasting activities;
- During electrical storms;
- In the event of severe dust (either from storms or operational activities);
- In the event of certain emergency scenarios, such as:
 - Bushfire;
 - Fire on site;
 - Chemical spills; and
 - Bomb threats.

Note: *The above list is not exhaustive and is a guide only.*

2. Identifying potential scenarios

As with all risks to workers health and safety, the first step to identifying hazardous situations that will require the withdrawal of workers, is to consult with workers. This can be achieved by consulting with the Health and Safety Committee and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) if in place or alternatively through toolbox meetings.

Note: *Documented records of this consultation shall be required to be maintained.*

It will also be beneficial to review your Hazard and Risk Register and your Incident Register to assist in the identification process.

3. Risk Management

Once all potential scenarios that will require workers to be withdrawn to a place of safety have been identified, a risk assessment shall be required to be conducted (in consultation with workers) on each scenario identified. This will enable controls to be identified and implemented.

Additionally, the risk assessments will assist in determining the appropriate place of safety to withdraw workers to, this may be to an Emergency Assembly Point (in the event of an emergency) or simply to the crib room (in the event of an electrical storm).

4. Preparing procedures

Upon completion of the risk assessments, detailed procedures will need to be developed and implemented (in consultation with workers) for each scenario. In some circumstances the procedure for withdrawing workers may be incorporated into other procedures, such as for blasting activities.

The withdrawal procedures need to clearly identify:

- What conditions / events that will initiate a withdrawal to safety;
- The responsible person/s for ensuring withdrawal;
- Where workers are to be withdrawn to; and
- What conditions deem it safe to return to work?

It is important to note that procedures for the withdrawal of workers that are as a result of emergency scenarios will need to be incorporated and referenced in the site Emergency Plan.

5. Information, training and instruction

Once all procedures relating to the withdrawal of workers to safety have been developed and implemented, all workers, inclusive of contractors and visitors, will need to be provided with training and instruction, in relation to the procedures.

Note: *Documented records of the information, training and instruction shall be required to be maintained in the site training and qualifications register and in personal training files.*

Providing of information, training and instruction of withdrawal to safety procedures for new workers, inclusive of contractors and visitors, could be incorporated into the sites induction process.

6. Review

All procedures relating to the withdrawal of workers to safety shall be reviewed at a minimum of three yearly or sooner following an event that required workers to be withdrawn to a place of safety.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

MAQOHSC Work Health and Safety Specialists are available to provide further advice and assistance on all Work Health and Safety matters.

MAQOHSC Work Health and Safety Specialists are able to be contacted via our website at www.maqohsc.sa.gov.au or email maqohsc@sa.gov.au.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Health and Safety Legislation, Codes of Practice, fact sheets, Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) information and guides can be found at the following websites:

SafeWork SA – www.safework.sa.gov.au or call 1300 365 255

Safe Work Australia – www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au or call 1300 551 832

REFERENCES

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)

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