

DATE: APRIL 2018

Missing or damaged protection devices on longwall equipment

This safety bulletin provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Issue

During recent assessment activities, NSW Resources Regulator inspectors have identified recurring instances in which protection devices on longwall equipment aimed to protect workers from serious injury or death, were missing and/or damaged.

Circumstances

Protection devices were provided by either original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), recommended by industry-recognised bodies or legislated as hazard control measures.

Examples of missing or damaged protection devices included, but were not limited to:

- missing or damaged base lift guards on powered roof supports
- sections of conveyor emergency pull wire (lanyard) not readily accessible for a worker potentially trapped in a danger area and a worker nearby (AS 4024-3610: sect 2.10.6.3).

Recommendations

1. A duty holder who implements a control measure to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety must ensure that the control measure is, and is maintained so that it remains, effective, including by ensuring that the control measure is and remains:
 - a. fit for purpose
 - b. suitable for the nature and duration of the work
 - c. installed, set up and used correctly.
2. Ensure the reliability of protection devices used at mine or petroleum sites to protect workers from the hazards posed by the plant or structure during each phase of its life cycle.
3. Review the operation's engineering control plan for the inclusion of inspections, testing, maintenance and repair of all protection devices.
4. Train workers in the requirements of defect management plans to ensure defective or faulty equipment is appropriately identified in repaired in a timely manner.

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this safety bulletin, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This safety bulletin should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board.

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information on which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Planning and Environment or the user's independent advisor.

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CM9 reference	PUB18/188
Mine safety reference	SB18-08
Date published	23 April 2017
Authorised by	Garvin Burns, Chief Inspector