

MinEx supports quarry regs proportionate to size

Eamon Rood - Fri, 28 Sep 2018

MinEx proposes extractives regulations that are proportional to the size of a given operation in its submission on the review of the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations & Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016.



The industry health and safety council wants a section added to regulations so that a quarry's health and safety management system is "commensurate with the size, nature and complexity of their operation."

It argues that such small sites should not require a Site Senior Executive as the quarry manager already requires a Certificate of Competence in relevant, safety-critical roles and manages all aspects of the quarry, including health and safety.

"To add another safety-critical CoC holder requirement to these small sites would be onerous and add little value to improving health and safety at the site," MinEx says.

"Many quarries, and some open cut metalliferous mines have just two or three workers on small footprints. The hazards and risks here, although similar in nature to all mines, require different controls and monitoring to large open cut operations employing large numbers of workers.

"Accordingly, we do not believe these sites should be required to develop highly prescriptive Principal Hazard Management Plans (PHMP) and/or Principal Control Plans (PCP), which were intended to manage catastrophic risks, primarily in underground coal mines."

MinEx adds that while quarries would benefit from some prescription around particular high consequence hazards such as ground control, traffic and explosives management, an approved code of practice or guidelines are the appropriate vehicle to achieve this.

"We do not believe the outdated and prescriptive Quarries Regulations 1999 (UK Regulations) add any value in these modern risk-based regulations."

"We also support WorkSafe's view that alluvial gold operations are generally smaller, and pose lower risk, so therefore should remain exempt from these regulations."

Qualifications

MinEx shares the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's position on the need for both A and B-Grade CoCs. It says any real differentiation in the competency needed should be based on whether there is a "true distinction" between higher and lower risk quarries.

"Given that more than 80 per cent of quarries in New Zealand employ four or less workers it is appropriate that size and scale should replace explosives as the test for whether a B-grade CoC is appropriate, and that the natural cut-off should be set at a maximum of 4 workers for a B-grade CoC."

MinEx also supports WorkSafe's view that many ironsand operations are similar in nature, size and complexity to quarries and "therefore the fit-for-purpose regulations proposed for quarries should also apply to ironsand operations.

"We propose provision of a supervisor position for quarries and ironsand operations where there are multiple small sites, mobile crushing plant operating at multiple sites concurrently, or large operations with multiple shifts and pits on the same site."

MinEx suggests that in these situations the quarry manager establish a new site or operation and ensure the HSMS is in place, while the supervisor would oversee day-to-day operations.