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7 June 2011

BY EMAIL - Letter to all Coal Mining SSEs on supervisors competencies

Dear Sir

Subject: Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee concerns regarding the provision of S1, S2 and S3 competencies to coal mining personnel

As Chair of the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee, I am concerned that **supervisor's training and supervisor's competencies** are not being adequately addressed at some minesites.

The Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 reflects the importance of supervisor's competencies, which fully occupies section 56 of the Act, and states that a site senior executive must not assign the tasks of a supervisor to a person unless the person is competent to perform the task assigned; and if there is a safety and health competency for supervisors recognised by the advisory committee, has the relevant competency.

For almost 9 years, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee has recognised three competencies, Apply the risk management process, Conduct safety and health investigations, and Communicate information, as vital for the supervisor position. The original competency designators, S1, S2 and S3, are still widely referred to in industry.

Given this investment in training over so many years, we should now have skilled supervisors, competent in applying risk management, conducting investigations and communication. In fact we frequently identify issues with supervisors and supervisor's competencies in our accident investigations and mines inspections. This raises concerns over the quality of S1, S2 and S3 competency provision to coal mining personnel on their sites.

As the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines identified when he wrote to you on 21 August 2009, we continually identify training courses, including the provision of S1, S2 and S3, with truncated delivery times. Now, as then, you as a customer can ensure the standards of training provided to your people are effective and deliver the quality of trainee you are entitled to expect.

Since that letter, Recognised Standard 11 Training in coal mines, has been issued (at [www.dme.qld.gov.au/zone_files/mines_safety-health/attach a recognised standard 11 training in coal mines.pdf](http://www.dme.qld.gov.au/zone_files/mines_safety-health/attach_a_recognised_standard_11_training_in_coal_mines.pdf)). It addresses two further concerns I have with the delivery of S1, S2 and S3, namely SSEs obligations regarding refresher training, and training delivery in a workplace context.

Recognised Standard 11 states that the SSE is responsible for ensuring refresher training occurs. The *Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001*, section 84, requires each coal mine worker at the mine, including each worker holding a senior management or supervisory position and each worker holding a certificate of competency, be given refresher training under the mine training scheme at least once in every five years.

Refresher training isn't necessarily full training and assessment against the full unit of competency and may be partially achieved by keeping a record of observations against the standards while the person under assessment is conducting routine work.

With respect to the workplace context, the Chief Inspector of Coal Mines' letter to you dated 10 December 2010 states that any training under the Coal Competency package training is, unless there is a safety concern, preferably undertaken in a work place, but can be undertaken in a class room or other place including a simulator. The assessment component must be conducted in a work place.

It is vital for the safety and health of coal mineworkers in this state that we ensure our supervisors training standards, including the provision of the required supervisors competencies, are to the highest achievable.

We must take every step to ensure that all of our workforce return home safe and healthy every day.

Yours sincerely



Stewart Bell
Chair, Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee
Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health

cc CMSHAC members