

File: 001645

10 December 2012

By EMAIL: Letter to all coal Site Senior Executives

Dear SSE

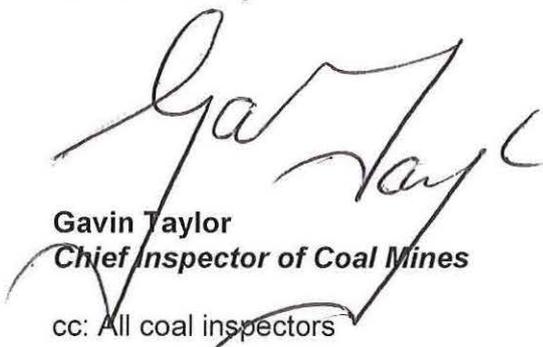
Re: Industry Information

Attached are two "open letters" to all coal mine workers and I would appreciate you posting these notices on your safety notice boards. The first communication deals with notification to SSEs of next of kin details. This matter was raised as a recommendation from a Coronial Enquiry and it concerns me that persons still have not lodged their correct and updated details. By posting we are taking reasonable steps to ensure persons are made aware of this critical requirement.

The second communication addresses a serious incident where a person with obligations under the legislation failed to discharge his duties as required. It is important for the safety and health of all coal mineworkers that persons with obligations correctly discharge their duties. Failure to do so may well have a number of serious consequences.

Your assistance in this matter is appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Gavin Taylor
Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

cc: All coal inspectors

Industry Notification

Mines Inspectorate—All coal mines

Mining Industry Notification No. 1 | 11 December 2012

Open letter to all Coal Mine Workers – Notification of Next of Kin

On occasions over the years there have been concerns surrounding the notification of the Next of Kin (NoK) and embarrassing issues caused by persons not providing the correct NoK details to their employers.

This was the subject of a Coroner's recommendation from the Inquest into the last underground coal fatality in April 2007. All recommendations from this Coroner were forwarded to all SSEs with a request to comply with the Coroner's findings. The particular "recommendation" referring to NoK stated:

"It is further recommended that coal mine operators adopt the following guiding principles in relation to the important task of notifying next-of-kin of coal mine workers in the event of a serious injury or fatality:

- (i) each mine's safety and health management system should include a protocol for the notification of next-of-kin in the event of a serious injury to or fatality of a coal mine worker;*
- (ii) the protocol should assign specific responsibility to a person to ensure that the notification is made as a matter of priority and in accordance with the protocol;*
- (iii) The protocol should require each employer at the mine to maintain a register, to be updated annually, of next-of-kin details and the name and contact details for a support person who may assist the next-of-kin. Where the employer is a contractor, the contractor should be required to immediately provide relevant details to the mine operator as and when required. If an injured worker is capable of instructing how notification should occur then the worker's instructions should be complied with when it is practical to do so;*
- (iv) If a worker is unable to provide instructions or is deceased, the next-of-kin should be advised as soon as possible after the incident occurred and the worker has been positively identified by at least two people well known to the worker, preferably one of whom would be the worker's immediate supervisor;*
- (v) Notifications should be carried out by or on behalf of the employer in person by at least two appropriately trained people, and wherever possible one person should be female. To the extent possible, details of what has occurred should be able to be provided at the time of the notification;*
- (vi) In the event of QPS conducting the notification in the first instance, additional support services should be provided by the employer as quickly as possible and in accordance with the needs of the next-of-kin;*
- (vii) Consideration should be given to how the notification will be made in circumstances where the next-of-kin resides a great distance from the employer, including interstate and overseas."*

Those recommendations should have been addressed and instituted at every coal mine in Queensland.

Of course, these recommendations can only be complied with if the SSE has the correct NoK details. Not having this is a major concern, as evidenced in the Pike River Mine disaster in New Zealand where out of date detail led to an ex-wife being contacted rather than the deceased's current partner. Please consider the trauma of the partner not knowing for some time whether their partner was involved and not being able to gain any detail when not listed as a NoK.

Contact: Gavin Taylor, Chief Inspector of Coal Mines, +61 7 3237 1585

Place the alert on noticeboards and ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy.

See more safety alerts and bulletins at <http://mines.industry.qld.gov.au/>

And the hazard database at <http://mines.industry.qld.gov.au/safety-and-health/publications-guides.htm>

Follow our updates and on Twitter and Facebook

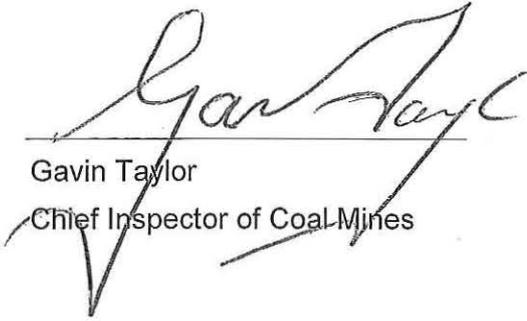


Please also consider if the person you nominate will be able to deal with any traumatic news and will be able to handle your affairs. The last point is most critical; do you wish someone handling your affairs if they are at odds with you or incapable of doing so in a correct and proper manner?

It is critical that your employer has the correct detail and I would urge all coal mine workers to ensure their employers have the correct personal details of your nominated NoK.

The possible hurt and distress to those nearest and dearest to you if not contacted at the earliest should concern you. In this day of multi-social media I doubt that you would want your NoK to find out inadvertently through a non-official source that you had been seriously injured or worse. Please consider their feelings and well being.

DO IT NOW – ENSURE YOUR DETAILS ARE CORRECT.



Gavin Taylor
Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

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Mines Inspectorate—All coal mines

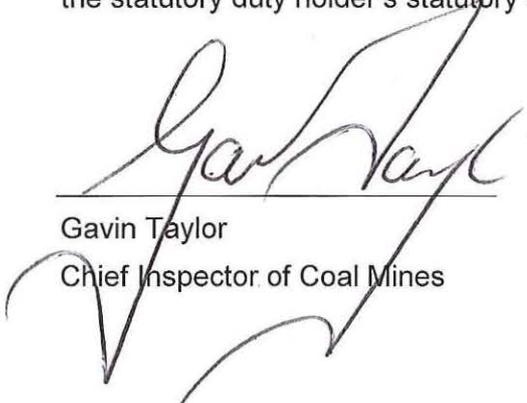
Mining Industry Notification No. 2 | 11 December 2012

Deputy failed to comply with legislation

On Tuesday 29 November 2011 a Deputy (ERZ Controller) entered a district of an underground mine (the Mine) and restarted an auxiliary fan, which had stopped operating for more than 30 consecutive minutes, without first conducting an inspection of the headings and faces which the fan was ventilating to ensure that there was no accumulation of flammable gas above the statutory limits. The Mine has a standard operating procedure containing the procedures for the use of auxiliary fans (the SOP) as required under the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Regulation 2001*. The action of the Deputy was in direct contravention of the SOP under the Mine's safety and health management system and contrary to recognised industry standards.

All individuals, who have obligations for the safety and health of coal mine workers imposed on them under the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999*, should be aware that failure to discharge your obligations opens you to disciplinary action and I strongly recommend that you read and understand the relevant legislation and ensure compliance. You have both a moral and a statutory duty to those whose lives and well being have been entrusted to you.

Non-compliance with statutory requirements can lead to prosecution and in the case of a statutory duty holder, submissions may be made to the magistrate to remove, suspend or otherwise deal with the statutory duty holder's statutory certificate of competence upon conviction.



Gavin Taylor
Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

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