



Queensland
Government

Department of
Natural Resources and Mines

File No: 001645

15 April 2013

BY EMAIL: Letter to all surface coal SSEs

Dear SSE

Subject: Light vehicle safety

As most of you will be aware, recently a number of operations have introduced 5 Star ANCAP rated vehicles to their sites. At one particular operation that had introduced this type of 4WD light vehicle an ISHR issued a section 167 Directive to *"stop the use of any mobile plant that is not protected by a protective structure shown to be of an equivalent (or better) engineered standard than in place at the mine prior to the change"*.

The Site Senior Executive of the mine concerned requested that I review the directive issued. That I did and after receiving additional requested detail from the SSE I was able to, following internal review with the inspectorate, form the opinion that the vehicles in question presented an acceptable level of risk.

Should you wish to introduce a vehicle rated to 5 Star ANCAP you, of course, must engage your change management process and introduction of a new vehicle to site, otherwise you maybe challenged on that aspect.

My main reason in communicating with you however, is not specifically related to ANCAP ratings or roll over protection but light vehicle safety and why vehicles are rolling over, a situation which is totally avoidable in my opinion. It is my considered opinion, after review of all such incidents dating back to 2004 of which there have been 78, that there are three main causes. Those being;

1. Operators are not sufficiently trained in the control of 4WD vehicles in off road conditions. This was the subject of a safety alert (Safety Alert No 251 issued on 23 November 2010) where by it was recommended that all 4WD light vehicle operators should be trained, assessed and authorised before being permitted to drive a vehicle on a mine site.

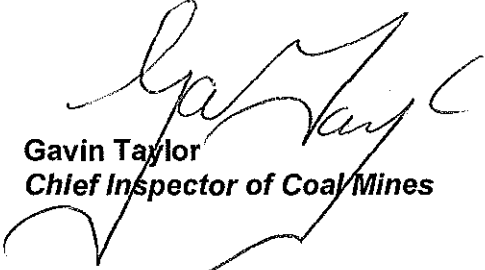
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2. Excess speed or driver inattention. Given all mines have a posted speed limit, somewhat lower than on public roads and the circuits are strictly controlled, roll-overs should not be occurring.
3. Road conditions where there is a loss of traction. This is caused by poor or substandard road construction and maintenance or more likely by excessive watering of the road.

I have instructed all inspectors to raise the profile on light vehicle operation and to issue directives where appropriate if they are of the belief that an acceptable level of risk does not exist. I am aware of course that many roll-overs occur due to the centre of gravity being raised by the addition of after markets products such as roll bars and overloading (tool boxes) but it requires loss of control of the vehicle for this to occur. Therefore the focus should be to ensure that loss of control does not occur in the first instance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter I can be contacted on (07) 3199 8007.

Yours sincerely



Gavin Taylor
Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

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All coal inspectors