

SAFETY BULLETIN

DATE: 14 MARCH 2022

Impacts of severe weather on slope stability

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

Background

Large parts of New South Wales have experienced significant rainfall over the past several days.

Severe weather events can disrupt mining operations as well as impact safe access and egress from mines. This safety bulletin serves as a reminder to people conducting a business or undertaking as a mine operator or contractor, to consider the risks posed by significant rainfall impacting slope stability of excavations, quarry benches, dumps and other structures.

Hazards

Prolonged rainfall can saturate soils, cause pooling on surfaces, lubrication of faults and cause erosion of roads and ramps. This can impact the safety of workers and safe access and egress to and from mine working areas.

Recommendations

Mine operators should monitor conditions and identify areas where the potential exists for slopes to fail. Areas which have potential to fail must be managed to ensure that workers are not impacted if a slope failure occurs. Monitor highwalls and benches for cracking, fretting and any other signs of movement. Ensure that drains are functioning correctly so that flood water cannot pool on the surface of highwalls, benches and dumps. Keep workers and equipment away from areas where stability has been compromised by recent rainfall.

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 in the mine's common area, such as your notice board where appropriate.

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Figure 1: Failure of overburden bench.



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