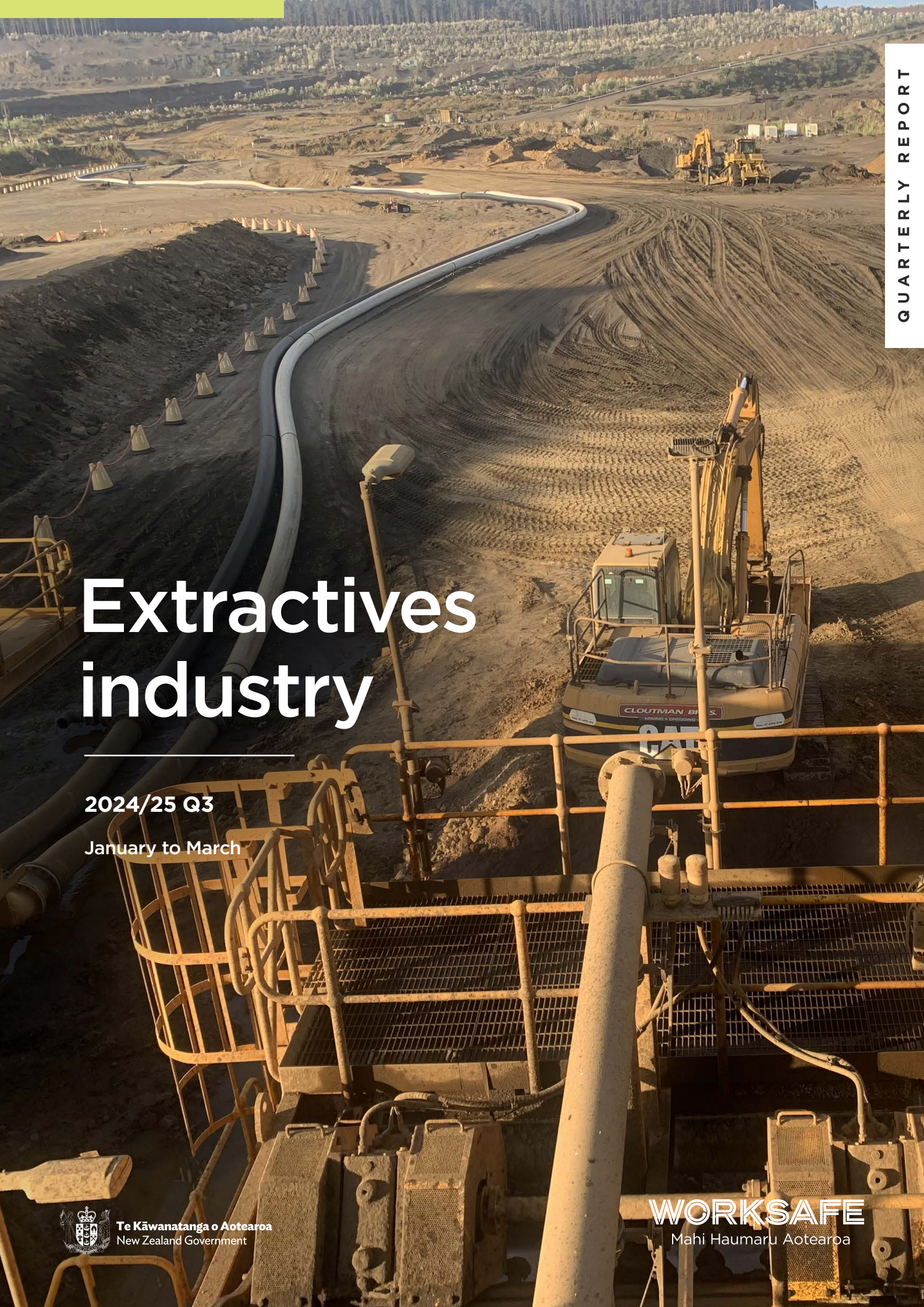
QUARTERLY REPORT

Extractives industry

2024/25 Q3

January to March



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

WORKSAFE
Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

About this report

This quarterly health and safety performance report has been prepared by WorkSafe New Zealand to provide extractives-specific information to mining, tunnelling and quarrying operations in New Zealand.

The information is derived from a variety of sources but the predominant source is industry itself, through notifiable incident reporting and quarterly reporting.

The report also contains information on the activities of the regulator, as well as commentary on industry performance and focus areas for regulation.

Operators should use the information presented in this report to assist them in improving safety management systems and undertaking risk assessments at their sites.

Foreword

Our mission is to transform New Zealand's health and safety performance towards world-class. To achieve this requires the commitment not just of WorkSafe New Zealand, but of businesses, workers and a wide range of other players in the health and safety system.

The extractives industry is potentially coming off a period of slowdown.

Record gold prices, the introduction of fast track permitting, and the recognition of the strategic value of many of the potential resources that New Zealand is fortunate to have in the ground is starting to attract investors.

While this this a good thing for industry and NZ, it also brings a new set of risks to our industry.

Any expansion of an existing operation or establishment of a new operation needs to be carefully planned and implemented.

Health and Safety should be the first consideration when designing what equipment and processes will be chosen for the operation.

Safety by design is often talked about but often overlooked at the best opportunity to adopt it – which is at the start!

The beginning of an operation (or any significant expansion of an existing operation) is normally the most economic time to get things right. Retrofitting is often more expensive and often not as effective.

It has been pleasing to have recently visited a new quarrying operation where the entire site has been designed for "life of quarry". The planning included consideration of extracting of all the resource to the end of the life of the quarry, and all the decisions on types of equipment and layout of the site consider this long-term understanding.

The benefits of any investment in setting up a new site are often calculated by the accountants with Net Present Value (NPV) calculations. The calculations determine what the optimum investment should be, the size of equipment, even how many workers should be employed etc.

But there should also be a long-term health and safety benefit consideration.

It is sometimes hard to predict a negative or attribute a cost to it, but avoidance of any serious safety incidents causing harm, as well as having an "intangible but infinite" advantage for those workers "not hurt", is almost certain to have a significant financial advantage for the operation.

The lowest cost to set up a compliant and safe operation can be achieved by good up-front design work.

For those that are considering new operations, please don't miss the opportunity.

Paul Hunt
Chief Inspector Extractives

CONTENTS

tables

figures

1.0
Industry profile

IN THIS SECTION:

1.1 Operations

3

Metalliferous opencast mines

21

Coal opencast mines
Includes 2 mine in care and maintenance

8

Metalliferous underground mines
Includes 1 mine under care and maintenance and 2 operating tourist mines

1

Coal underground mines
Includes 1 tourist mine under care and maintenance

7

Tunnels
Does not include tunnels that notified commencement but did not begin operating in the quarter

3

Coal exploration
Three operational coal exploration projects

74

Alluvial mines
Number of mines that have been verified (59) or have notified of an Appointed Manager to WorkSafe (15)

Includes 2 iron sands mines

1,021

Quarries
Number of quarries that have been verified (864) or have notified of an Appointed Manager to WorkSafe but not yet verified (157)

The extractives industry is to understand its makeup in terms of the number and scale of operations and the number and competency of workers involved.

There were 1,138 active operations in New Zealand as at the end of March 2025.

Active mining operations include those that are operating, intermittently operating, under care and maintenance, or undertaking rehabilitation, as well as tourist mines. Active quarries and alluvial mine numbers include operations that have been verified as actively or intermittently operating (that is, visited by WorkSafe), or have notified WorkSafe of an appointed manager.

1.2 People

972

Metalliferous opencast mines
633 FTEs employed by mine operators and 339 FTEs employed by contractors

885

Coal opencast mines
761 FTEs employed by mine operators and 124 FTEs employed by contractors

593

Metalliferous underground mines
473 FTEs employed by mine operators and 120 FTEs employed by contractors

0

Coal underground mines
0 FTEs employed by mine operators and 0 FTEs employed by contractors

214

Tunnels
194 FTEs employed by mine operators and 21 FTEs employed by contractors

3

Coal exploration
8 workers employed by mine operators and 7 workers employed by contractors

621

Alluvial mines
Number of workers is known for 53 of the 74 alluvial mines that are verified and/or have notified of an Appointed Manager. The total number of workers has been extrapolated for the remaining 21 operations

3,280

Quarries
Number of workers is known for 699 of the 1,021 quarries that are verified and/or have notified of an Appointed Manager. The total number of workers has been extrapolated for the remaining 322 operations

There were 6,568 Extractives FTEs in New Zealand as at the end of March 2025The numbers of workers will also vary from quarter to quarter. Changes in the number of quarry and alluvial mine workers largely reflect the changes in the number of active operations verified by inspectors. Part of those verifications includes determining the number of workers at each operation.

Note: Typically >95% of mining operations and tunnelling operations submit quarterly reports to WorkSafe, and the numbers of workers are reported directly from these figures.

Quarterly reports were provided by 19 alluvial mining operations (26%) and 207 active quarries (20%). That is the reason for the significant difference between the extrapolated numbers of workers and the actual number of workers reported for these sectors in Figure 2. WorkSafe will continue to extrapolate numbers of workers for quarries and alluvial mines until the reporting percentage has improved.

Figure 1 shows the total hours worked in Q3 2024/25, reported to WorkSafe in the quarterly reporting. The hours are separated into Employees and Contractors.

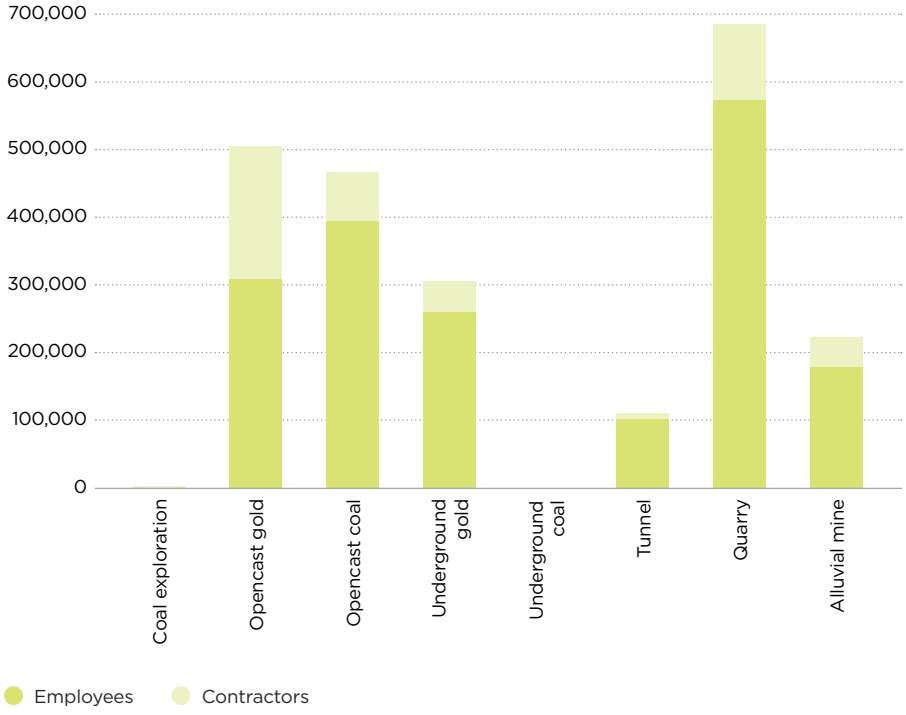


FIGURE 1:
Total hours worked by sector 2024/25 Q3

Figure 2 shows the number of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) calculated from total hours worked that were reported to WorkSafe in quarterly reports for Q3 2024/25. The hours are separated into Employees and Contractors.

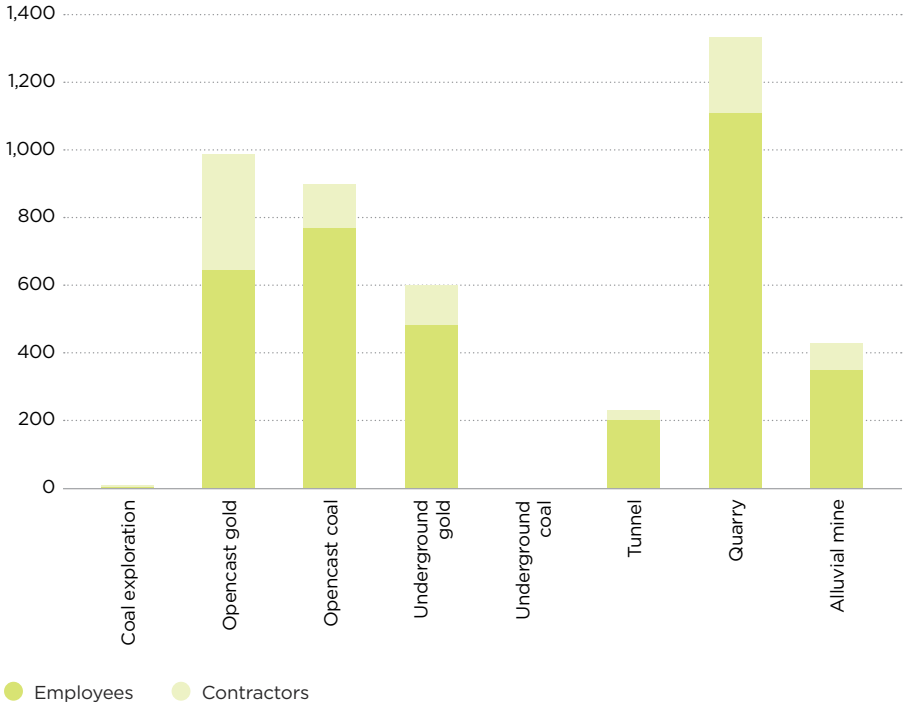


FIGURE 2:
Number of FTEs by sector 2024/25 Q3

1.3 Developing competence

WorkSafe has responsibility for setting competency standards in the Extractives Industry. Improving the competence of the people in the industry is one of the most important aspects of improving health and safety performance. WorkSafe appoints the New Zealand Mining Board of Examiners (BoE) to recommend competency requirements, conduct oral examinations and to issue, renew, cancel or suspend Certificates of Competence (CoCs).

The BoE continues to be busy with renewals and oral exams. The BoE has adopted a system of campaign oral examinations. They choose a period of several weeks and then schedule examinations (25 plus examinations each period) for those days. With the current number of new applications, the BoE are scheduling these "examination weeks" at a frequency of every three or four months.

The advantages of having the campaign approach are that panels can be formed up to conduct three examinations a day of similar CoC type, and then the processing of the panel's recommendations can be completed more efficiently with the BoE.

Once your application has been processed and completed the BoE Secretariat will advise on the first available examination slot. Although this might be a few months for some, in general the time taken for processing of applicants to oral examinations is reduced.

Renewals are also relatively up to date. The last few longer standing applicants (where more information had been required) have been processed in the last few months and there are only 5 or 6 renewals in process at the time of writing this report.

What is important to note is that commencing July this year the original bulk issued CoCs are up for renewal. We refer to the original issue of CoCs in the new regime in 2015. About 800 CoCs were issued to existing CoC holders from July 2015 through to June 2016. These were first renewed 2020-21 and are due again starting July 2025.

At the last renewal the number reduced – some may have retired or moved on to other work, and only about 500 renewed.

We are anticipating a busy year with potentially 400 to 500 renewals required in the period July 2025 to June 2026.

We would emphasise now that a correct application will ensure faster processing of applications. The BoE expects those that have renewed once already to have the correct CPD logbooks on this submission. If in doubt, please contact the Secretariat prior to submitting your application.

The BoE is not obliged to renew any incomplete application. In the past the Secretariat has spent a considerable amount of time assisting applicants to correct applications.

Remember – applications must be submitted to the Secretariat two months prior to the expiry date of the CoC.

Table 1 provides a summary of oral exams conducted during the quarter.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ORAL EXAMS HELD Q3 JAN-MAR 25	TOTAL PASSES	SUCCESS %
23	14	60.9%

TABLE 1: Oral exams conducted

Table 2 provides a summary of all CoCs issued during the quarter and the current number of CoCs in circulation at the end of Q2 2024/25.
Note: We no longer report Life Time CoCs.

COC TYPE	TOTAL COCs RENEWED Q3 Jan–Mar 2025	TOTAL NEW COCs ISSUED Q3 Jan–Mar 2025	TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT COCs
A Grade Quarry Manager	3	7	331
B Grade Quarry Manager	5	3	432
A Grade Opencast Coal Mine Manager	0	0	60
B Grade Opencast Coal Mine Manager	0	2	53
A Grade Tunnel Manager	1	0	43
B Grade Tunnel Manager	0	0	81
Site Senior Executive	1	2	59
First Class Coal Mine Manager	0	0	15
First Class Mine Manager	1	0	21
Coal Mine Deputy	0	0	30
Coal Mine Under viewer	0	0	20
Mechanical Superintendent	0	0	24
Electrical Superintendent	0	1	21
Ventilation Officer	0	0	6
Mine Surveyor	2	1	14
Site Specific	0	0	4
Winding Engine Driver	0	0	1
A-grade alluvial mine manager	0	1	1
B-grade alluvial mine manager	0	0	0
Total	**13**	**14**	**1,216**

TABLE 2: Certificates of Competence issued and in circulation

2.0 Health and safety performance

IN THIS SECTION:

2.1 Notifiable events

For all extractive operations, notifiable events are required to be reported to WorkSafe under S23(1), S24(1) and S25(1) of the Act, and under Schedule 5 of the Regulations. Notifiable events include any notifiable incidents, notifiable injuries or illnesses, or fatalities.

The tables below show the number of notifiable events and the number of operations that notified events for the previous five years and for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2024/25 for mines and tunnels (Table 3) and quarries and alluvial mines (Table 4).

MINES AND TUNNELS	2019/20 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2020/21 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2021/22 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2022/23 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2023/24 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q3
Number of notifiable events	20	18	20	21	22	11	24	29
Number of operations that notified events	11	9	11	10	11	7	9	11

TABLE 3: Mines and tunnels – notifiable events and operations that notified events

QUARRIES AND ALLUVIAL MINES	2019/20 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2020/21 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2021/22 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2022/23 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2023/24 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2024/25 Q1	2024/25 Q2	2024/25 Q3
Number of notifiable events	18	16	14	17	18	24	18	17
Number of operations that notified events	15	12	13	15	21	21	16	17

TABLE 4: Quarries and alluvial mines – notifiable events and operations that notified events

Figure 3 shows the number of notifiable events reported to WorkSafe by sector from April 2023 to March 2025.

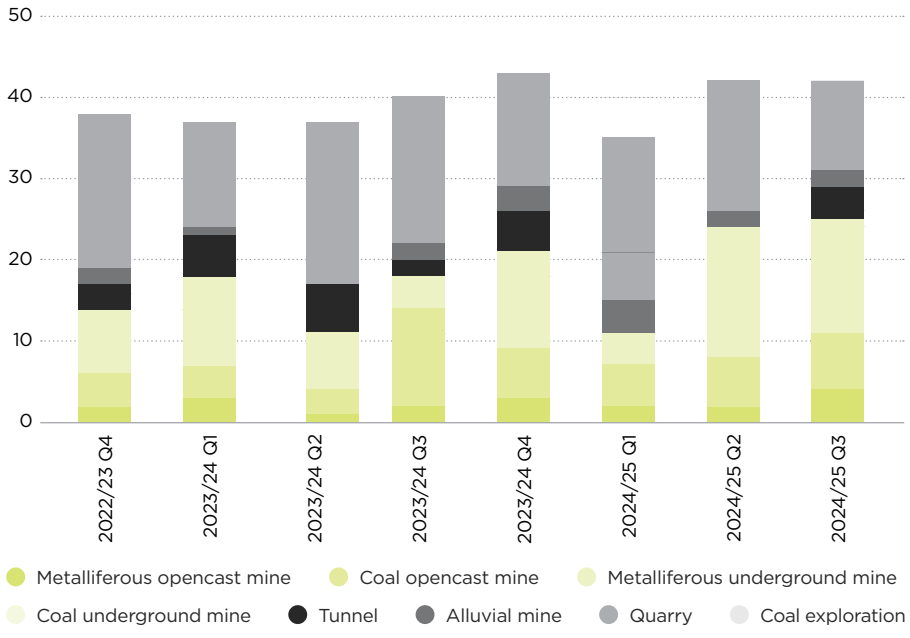


FIGURE 3: Notifiable events by sector

2.2 Injuries

Additional information about injuries is reported to WorkSafe in the form of Quarterly Reports and Records of Notifiable Events under Schedules 6 and 8 of the Regulations.

Figure 4 shows the number of injuries by injury type reported to WorkSafe from January 2022 to March 2025. The graph also shows the rolling 12-month average for the Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate (TRIFR), the rate of recordable injuries that occurred per million hours worked. The current rolling 12-month average TRIFR is 2.3. Rates have fluctuated over past two years without any clear trend.

While TRIFR is not the only measure indicating the health of the industry, it is a useful indicator of how workers are being injured and should be interpreted in conjunction with other data such as notifiable event information.

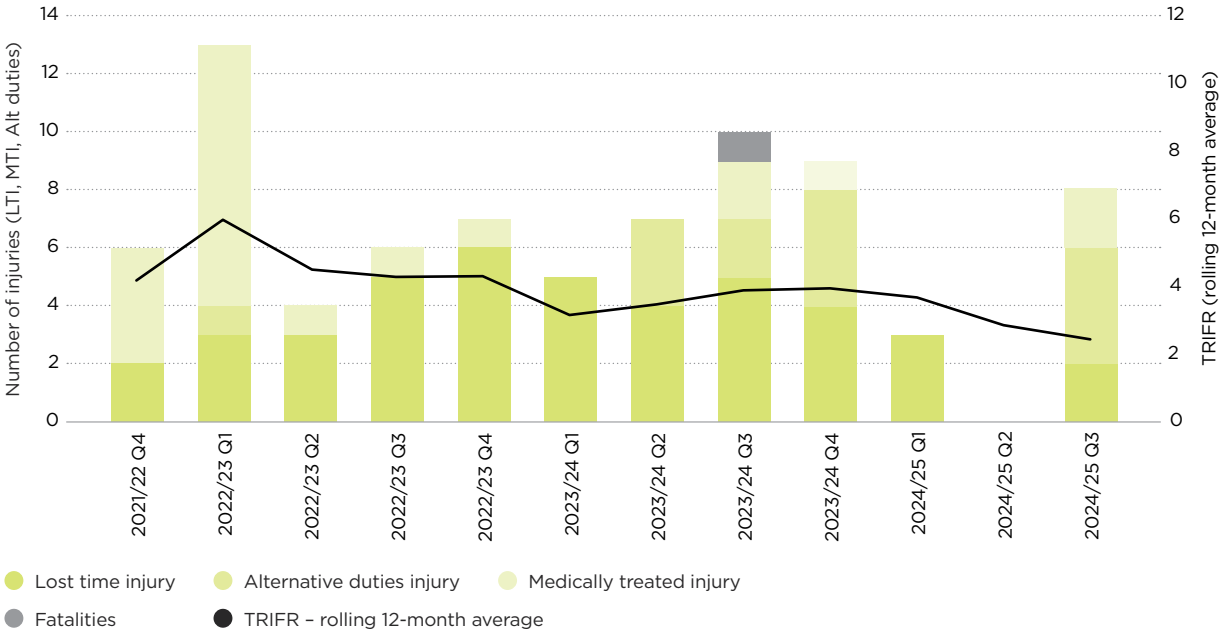


FIGURE 4: TRIFR

The following injury definitions are taken from Schedule 8 of the Regulations:

- **Lost-time injuries** are events that involved injury or illness of a mine worker that resulted in the inability of the worker to work for one day or more (not including the day of the event) during the reporting period (whether the worker is rostered on that day or not).
- **Alternative duties injuries** are events that involved injury or illness of a mine worker that resulted in the worker being on alternative duties during the reporting period.
- **Medical treatment injuries** are work-related injuries to mine workers that required medical treatment during the reporting period but did not require a day lost from work or alternative duties (other than the day of the event).

2.3 Types of events

Figure 5 shows the notifiable event categories for events notified to WorkSafe in the previous 12 months. The data shows that 48 percent of notifiable events in the past 12 months have occurred in relation to vehicles and plant (31%), and fire, ignition, explosion or smoke (17%). These two categories are broken down in more detail in the following section. A further 11% of notifiable events in the past 12 months occurred in relation to ground, geotechnical and other structural failures.

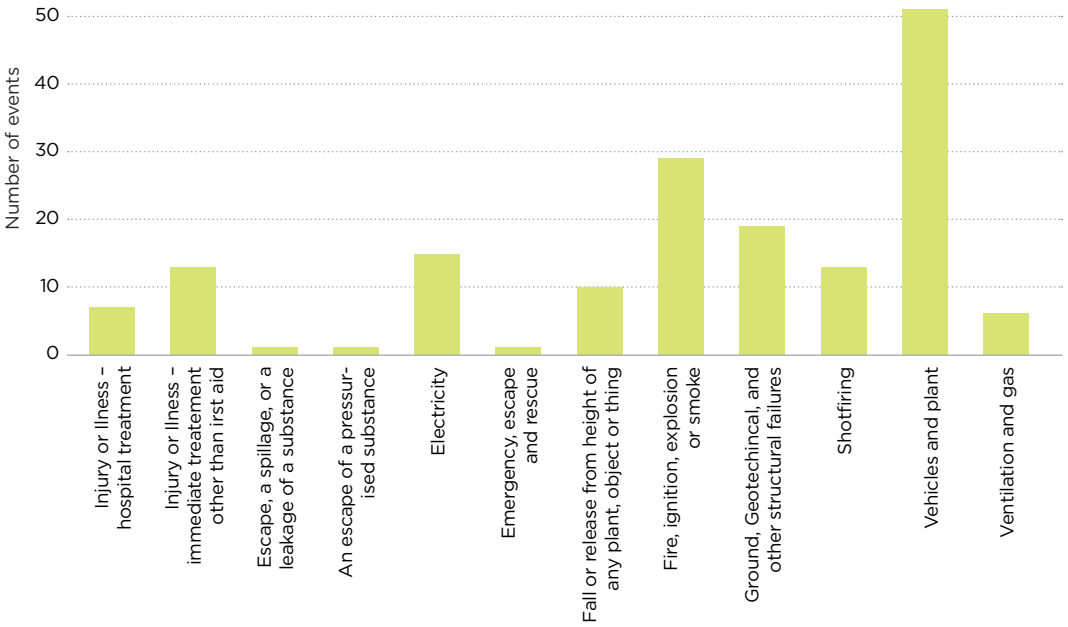


FIGURE 5: Notifiable event categories for the previous 12 months

2.4 Extractives sector focus areas

Where there is a high frequency of notifiable events in any Schedule 5 category, we have broken these events down in more detail to identify key focus areas. We will target our inspections to ensure that operators have adequate controls in place to address these risks.

Figures 6 and 7 break down the two largest notifiable event categories in the past 12 months into the corresponding Schedule 5 sub-categories. The data shows that for notifiable events related to fire, ignition, explosion or smoke, 93% involve fires on plant, mobile plant or in buildings associated with mining or tunnelling activities, and 7% involves the outbreak of a fire on the surface or underground. The vehicle and plant-related notifiable events involve collision of mobile plant with other plant (27%), overturning of mobile plant (49%), breach of a safety berm or windrow (6%), and unintended movement or brake failure (18%).

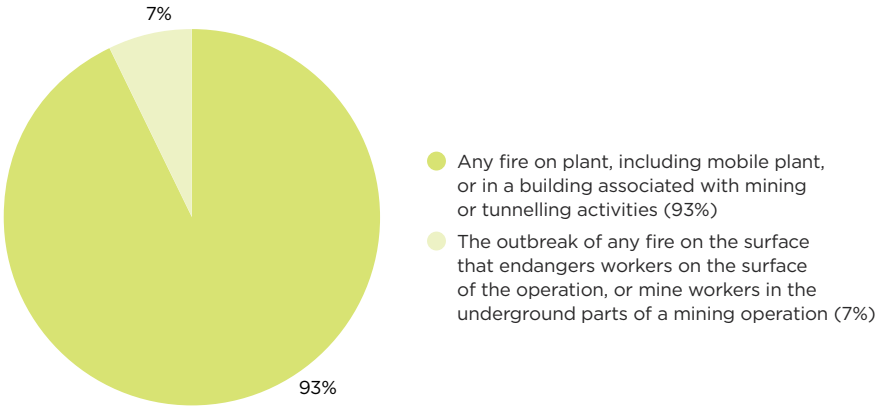


FIGURE 6: Fire, ignition, explosion or smoke-related notifiable event sub-categories

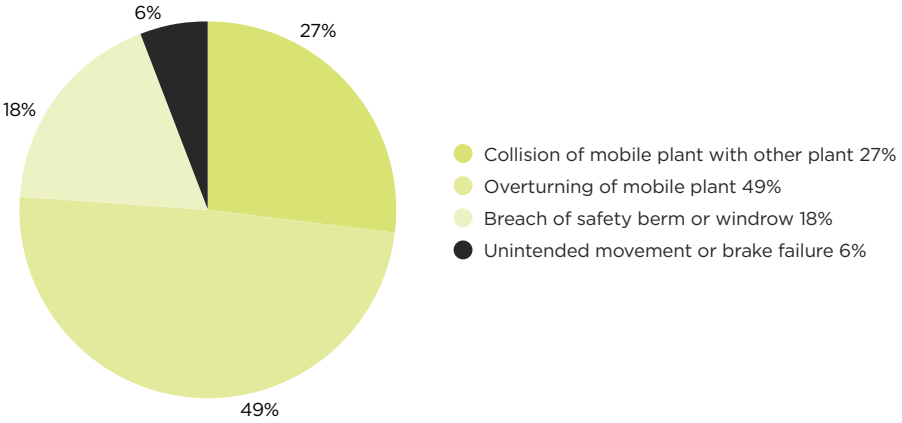


FIGURE 7: Vehicles and plant-related notifiable event sub-categories

Consistency of reporting

Mining and tunneling data are received from a high proportion of those operations and are considered to be accurate. Notifiable events were reported by 26% of operations in the past quarter, and quarterly reports were submitted by 100% of operations this quarter.

Quarrying and alluvial mining data are received from a much lower proportion of those operations and are likely to be less accurate. Notifiable events were reported by 1.5% of operations in the past quarter. Quarterly reports were provided by 19 active alluvial mining operations (26%) and 207 active quarries (20%).

2.5 Regulator comments

Most incident investigations submitted to WorkSafe conclude that competency failures contributed to the incident that had been investigated. This should not be a surprise to operators as human error is almost certain to occur at some time.

The key obligation of operators is to ensure that mitigations are built into work processes to limit the consequences of predictable human errors. In general, this should involve layers of controls, ensuring that if one layer fails (in this discussion a human error occurs) that the system limits the consequence of the control failure to a low level with low probability of any harm occurring.

Ensuring competent workers will remain an important aspect of most sites' Health and Safety management system.

Some key principles in establishing competence

1. All roles where competence is considered a control should be identified through risk assessment.
2. The assessment of where competence is required should consider all the possible situations that a role may be exposed to, not just the normal circumstances. E.g. variable and extreme environmental conditions, emergency scenarios, limited resources - shortfall of other roles, or equipment.
3. Those people in these roles should clearly understand the requirements and responsibilities of the position and the level of competence required.
4. The degree of training to be competent, and the maintenance of this competence should be proportionate to the risks involved in the role. More robust training for higher risk roles.
5. Training while being a key part of establishing competence is not sufficient on its own. Experience in a role, practice of required skills and testing of competence under likely scenarios (including emergencies) is also important to establish reliable competence.
6. All training should be undertaken by a competent trainer.
7. Training should involve validation. Has the person gained the competence required – not just attended the course.
8. All training should be recorded.
9. After initial training it is important to ensure that adequate supervision is in place to observe actual on the job competence.
10. All competence should be revalidated in a systematic way. Retesting and refreshers should be scheduled and undertaken as required.
11. All previous training may be inadequate when new or updated equipment or systems and processes are introduced. The required competence should be amended and training and testing etc. updated to the new competence requirements. People in existing roles will need to undertake the updated training.
12. Often non-extractives specialist work will be undertaken on sites. Careful review of the competence of contractors is an important part of maintaining a safe workplace. The actions of contractors can create risks for themselves and for the site staff. Undertake a review of the contractor's training records and review the contractor's previous H&S performance or request references. It is important to ensure there is good supervision of contractors to confirm competence.

2.6 High potential incidents

A high potential incident at a mine, quarry or tunnel is an event, or a series of events, that causes or has the potential to cause a significant adverse effect on the safety or health of a person.

High potential incidents – 2024/25 Q2

Table 5 provides a summary of high potential incidents notified to WorkSafe in Q3 2024/25. The summaries are an abridged version from the operator's notification report.

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Jan-25	IT has driven into the rear of light vehicle moving it between 500mm-750mm sideways and 500mm-750mm forward into wall. Zero injuries sustained.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	While removing bolts to lower a hinged belly plate under an underground truck, the maintenance person jammed their finger between the heavy belly plate and the edge of the pit, being a steel angle.	– Risk assessment – Job Planning – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	A haul truck encountered loss of traction resulting in uncontrolled movement. The loss of traction led to a 90-degree left turn, causing the truck to come into contact with the windrow causing damage to the access stairs.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	Jumbo operator trammed rig to the face to commence bolt meshing operations. They lowered the jack legs and heard a bang and on inspection the jumbo trailing cable has faulted and arced.	– Electricity – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	Sub station had tripped and when electrician investigated they found an electrical cable in the backs of one of the drives and it appears to have arced, assumedly due to an internal fault.	– Electricity – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	Whilst reversing an articulated dump truck, the operator misjudged the distance from the stockpile and reversed onto the stockpile with one set of wheels. This resulted in the tray to roll over. No injury was sustained, and no damage resulted from the incident.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	Contractors working on ROM pad removing steel from ore, saw some signal tube. Inspection found the signal tube appears to have gone off, the detonator not.	– Shotfiring – Supervision – Training
Jan-25	Operator has bought in a load of waste rock into the stock pile area to tip off and has parked the truck across the grade on the ramp to tip the load off and while tipping the ADT tray has fallen over.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb-25	While operator was driving underground they noticed loss of power and smell of burning, immediately stopped vehicle, noticed fire and activated AFFF which put out the fire.	– Fire or explosion – Emergency response – Training

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Feb 25	A new stormwater pipe was being constructed and a shaft had been built in the middle to facilitate the construction of the tunnel. The uphill drive had been completed and the tunnelling crew were completing the downhill drive. A separate crew were working on the concrete inlet structure at the end of the uphill drive. These works are in the open and separate from the tunnelling operation. The uphill pipe had been largely sealed off at the shaft with a concrete backing block, with a small gap to allow for inspections and water management. The fan was exhausting at the face of the downhill drive. The crew working at the concrete inlet structure used a petrol-powered concrete saw. The CO gas from this saw has been pulled through into the shaft and set the gas detector off. The crew in the shaft and tunnel have safely evacuated without harm	– Air Quality – Ventilation – Job planning – Risk assessment – Isolation of mining hazards
Feb 25	Whilst dumping material onto a stockpile, employee reversed ADT rear axles up onto stockpile and began to raise deck to dump material. Employee then began to drive ADT slowly forward whilst dumping remainder of load and whilst doing so began to feel deck begin to tip over to the right hand side. Employee then stopped moving truck forward but deck continued to tilt sideways falling onto its right hand side and coming to rest on adjacent stockpile. Cab of vehicle remained upright and no injuries sustained by employee.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	Operator was lowering a platform on the cabolter rig. Their hand has slipped and finger has been caught in the platform, degloving the tip of their finger	– Job Planning – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	The dump truck was beneath the conveyor tail of the roadheader being loaded with spoil. A number of loads had already been completed. During this load the operator has gone to move the dump truck further beneath the conveyor to continue with the loading process, the gear would not engage. The operator stated that the engine appeared to rev loudly and then the dump truck began to roll/slide down the ramp. The operator attempted to apply the brakes and hand brake but they did not respond. The dump truck stopped when it contacted an EWP parked up (not in use) off to the side of the main access road. Other witnesses stated there appeared to be an abnormal noise from the dump truck. The operator exited the dump truck and isolated the machine. There were no injuries.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Mechanical – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	2 x Misfire. Shots were being fired with the new E*STAR electronic firing system being introduced to site, high leakage was causing firing box to register nonexistent errors across the blast one remove off the firing line shot was clear to fire.	– Shotfiring – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	Excavator has dug up an unknown unexploded booster and line	– Shotfiring – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	While performing housekeeping at the entry point of the plant, a 1.7 Tonne excavator was used. The operator has proceeded to narrow the tracks to get closer to the entry point to remove product from the shed. After completing this, they reversed back and failed to widen the tracks for safe operation. While moving the product, the excavator tipped on its side.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Job Planning – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb-25	Dozer has backed up and made contact with the with the mirror on a dump truck. Haul truck was backing up to dump load off at the dump, Dozer called up haul truck to back up on the dozers left. Haul truck has backed up about 1.5 meters away from the dozer, dozer has backed up to give indication for haul truck to stop. As dozer has backed up the left side hand rail of dozer has made contact with the mirror on haul truck.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Feb 25	Length of vent duct suspended in the shaft became detached from the ventilation column, and slid down the catenary wire to land on a pump platform at the bottom of the shaft. A walkway was nearby.	– Falls from height – Workplace inspection – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	Haul Truck was maneuvering into position to dump its load at the tip head when Bulldozer reversed, making contact with the right side of the haul truck. The impact resulted in significant damage to the walkway and handrails.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	A contracted maintenance worker tried to retrieve a screen panel which had fallen down a chute. In doing so, they stepped awkwardly on the side of the chute, twisting their ankle. As they tried to correct his ankle, they could hear a loud snap. They then slid down to the bottom of the chute (approx. 1.2m) and was evacuated from the area through an emergency.	– Job Planning – Contractor management – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Feb 25	Surveyors have entered under a fired round that had only been fibrecreted and did not have all ground support in place. The required signage and warning systems were in place.	– Ground or strata instability – Induction – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Loader reversed into Dump Truck	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Unexploded detonator and booster uncovered while digging	– Shotfiring – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	A welding process was being undertaken in good conditions under the crusher when the worker dropped the welding terminal onto their abdomen area, receiving a mild electric shock until it could be removed from their person. Mild shock delivered from dropped welder terminal similar to electric fence intensity but for some seconds as the victim evacuated a restricted space	– Electricity – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Digger Operator had just finished digging a small hole, which filled with water instantly. Operator wanted to get to the other side of that small hole they had just dug. They then entered the surrounding watered area approx. 300mm deep and felt the digger slip sideways (into the small hole). They knew they were in trouble and turned the digger boom to try and pull/climb the digger out. When they realised the digger was stuck, they followed company procedure. They switched the digger off, exited the digger as normal via standing on the track and onto dry land. They did not get wet. They contacted the other operator onsite and then notified management. Operator was not injured or harmed and machine was not damaged.	– Ground or strata instability – Job Planning – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Loaded truck coming up the decline, LV coming down. Truck has seen the LV lights coming down and stopped but the LV has not seen the truck until last minute. LV has tried to avoid contact, but driven up the wall slightly and become wedged between the wall and the truck.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Contractor demolition workers (4) finished their morning break. Two of the workers were working around the contractor's container and another two at a location approx. 1 km from the container. The two workers working at the container had a meeting to discuss how they were going to approach the next stage of demolition. The other two workers got into a light vehicle and started to reverse. The LV backed approx. 10m and made contact with the other two workers. One person was struck on the right calf by the towbar, and the second person was stuck in the back by the flatdeck tray. The second person was knocked over. Both workers were assessed by medical staff and cleared to return to work.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Mar 25	Worker was operating a digger, searching for rock in the riverbed. They tracked a few rocks and moved them down stream and placed them on the bank to be loaded out. They picked up a rock and was slewing to the left when they felt the digger toppling over to the left. They tried to release the rock and push the boom down to upright the digger. This was unsuccessful and the digger fell over. The worker sustained minor cuts from the window of the cab when it broke. The cuts were treated by a medical professional and was bandaged to prevent infection.	– Roads and vehicle operating areas – Emergency response – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	Tramming loader to stockpile, operator noticed smoke coming from centre hitch, got out to inspect and notice a small flame on a wire. Put it out and reported.	– Fire or Explosion – Emergency response – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	After welding repairs were completed, contractor welder was descending access ladder, lost footing and fell, landing on back, also struck head on a rock.	– Falls from height – Job Planning – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	A stope was bogged out clean and inspected by the Geotech, who then inspected the Escapeway and cuddy located above the stope. The geotech then found the back/right corner of the cuddy had collapsed. The area was barricaded off.	– Ground or strata instability – Tips, Ponds & Voids – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training
Mar 25	A truck driver was standing up on the deck behind the cab and slipped, landed on their feet but stumbled backwards and tripped over some steel frames and fell and got a 50mm cut below the knee. Driver taken to hospital by vehicle and doctors have used butterfly dressings to close the cut.	– Job Planning – Risk assessment – Supervision – Training

TABLE 5: High potential incidents – 2024/25 Q3

Table 6 and Figure 8 shows the number of high potential incidents per quarter during the last two years for all extractives operations.

QUARTER	Q3 JAN-MAR 2023	Q4 APR-JUN 2023	Q1 JUL-SEP 2023	Q2 OCT-DEC 2023	Q3 JAN-MAR 2024	Q4 APR-JUN 2024	Q1 JUL-SEP 2024	Q2 OCT-DEC 2024	Q3 JAN-MAR 2025	TOTAL PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS
Number of high potential incidents	22	21	24	22	25	29	27	35	**32**	**123**

TABLE 6: High potential incidents per quarter

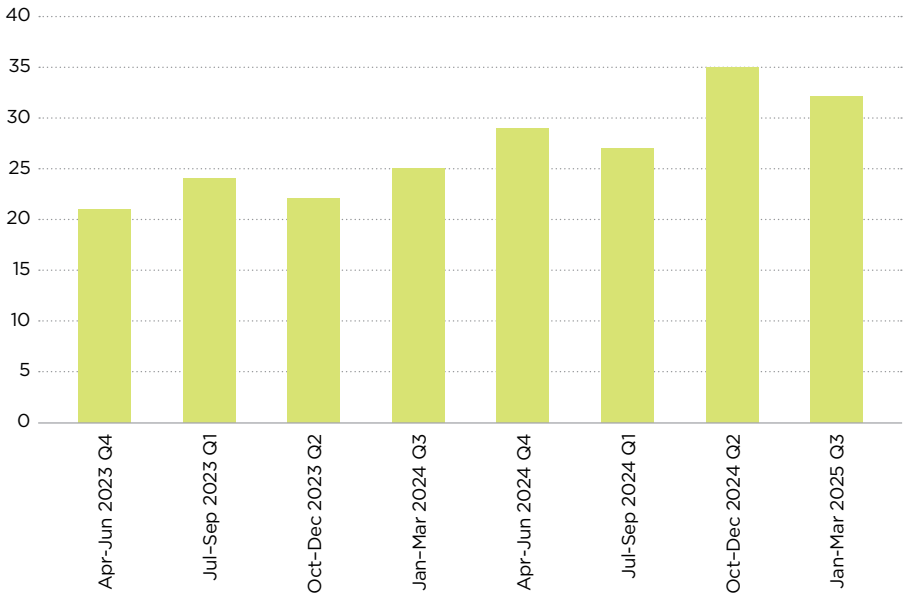


FIGURE 8: High potential incidents per quarter

2.7.1 High potential incidents – investigation outcomes

High Potential Incident Case Study – Contractor Management	
Feb 25	A contracted maintenance worker tried to retrieve a screen panel which had fallen down a chute. In doing so, they stepped awkwardly on the side of the chute, twisting their ankle. As they tried to correct his ankle, they could hear a loud snap. They then slid down to the bottom of the chute (approx. 1.2m) and was evacuated from the area through an emergency.

TABLE 7: High potential incident – investigation outcomes case study

THE INCIDENT

At around 5am, two contractors were changing screen panels in a shaker when one panel slipped and fell into a chute below. In an attempt to retrieve it, a contractor entered the chute from a side panel, slipped on a rubber mat, fell approximately 1.2m to the bottom, twisted and fractured their ankle.

FINDINGS AND LEARNINGS FROM THE PCBU INVESTIGATION:

The immediate cause of this incident was the slip in the chute, which lacked suitable means to maintain three points of contact while trying to retrieve a fallen panel. The investigation identified unsatisfactory handrails and broken steps into the chute which were not in a usable state.

The root cause of the incident was caused by inadequate work planning, as the routine task of retrieving panels that fell into the chute, did not identify the risk of falling, and no appropriate controls were therefore applied.

Possible contributing factors to this incident was the use of safety boots which were not tight fitting, lace up, ankle high safety boots, but rather slip on rigger type boots.

The investigation also identified that there was inadequate lighting within the chute, and a phone light was used for illumination.

FIGURE 9:
Incident scene

REGULATOR COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Planning for safe work

Too many workplace incidents are caused by a failure to plan and organise work properly.

Planning safe work means:

- identifying the hazards
- assessing the hazards
- controlling the hazards
- monitoring your approach
- documenting your approach.

Operators should ensure that all work is effectively risk assessed with input from workers and appropriately detailed JSEA's are provided to workers to undertake work safely. Those that undertake risk assessments should be suitably trained in the process.

Contractors and overlapping duties

Contractors and subcontractors may be individuals or businesses. Contractors and subcontractors (and their employees) who are carrying out work for the contracting PCBU are considered to be workers of the contracting PCBU under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) and the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016.

PCBUs operating in a contracting chain will have shared health and safety duties with other PCBUs in that contracting chain (known as overlapping duties).

All PCBUs, so far as is reasonably practicable, must consult, cooperate, and coordinate together to manage their overlapping duties.

There are four main points to remember about overlapping duties:

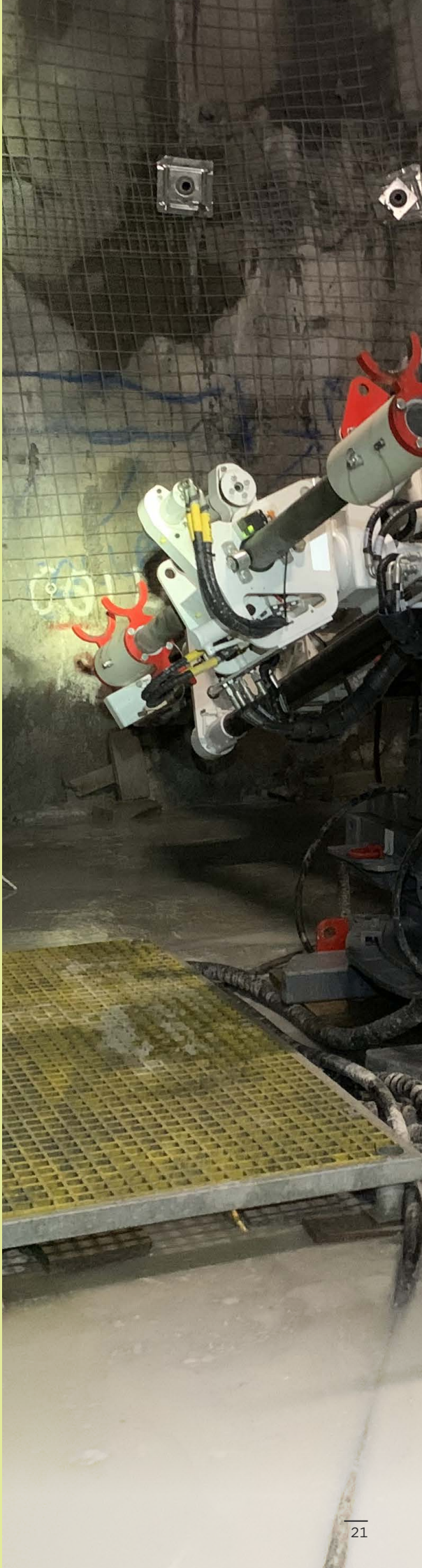
- PCBUs have a duty to consult, cooperate with, and coordinate activities with all other PCBUs they share overlapping duties with, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- PCBUs cannot contract out of their health and safety duties or push risk onto others in a contracting chain.
- PCBUs can enter into reasonable agreements with other PCBUs to make sure that everyone's health and safety duties are met. But PCBUs must monitor each other, to make sure each PCBU continues to do what was agreed.
- The more influence and control a PCBU has over a work site or a health and safety matter, the more responsibility they are likely to have.

It is more likely that a business will successfully meet their duty to consult, cooperate and coordinate if they:

- plan ahead, by thinking through every stage of the work, and recognising how the work could affect other businesses and the public
- identify the health and safety risks that need managing
- consult other businesses to agree how to control each risk
- consult other businesses to decide which business, or businesses, are best placed to control each risk
- clearly define roles, responsibilities and actions, and explain these so everyone knows what to expect.

3.0 Regulatory insights

IN THIS SECTION:



Fatalities in the extractives industry

Since 2011 (post Pike River) there has been an average of 1 fatal accident per year at extractive sites. Looking further back, between 1957 and 2006 the figure was more sobering, with an average of 5.5 fatalities per year in the sector.

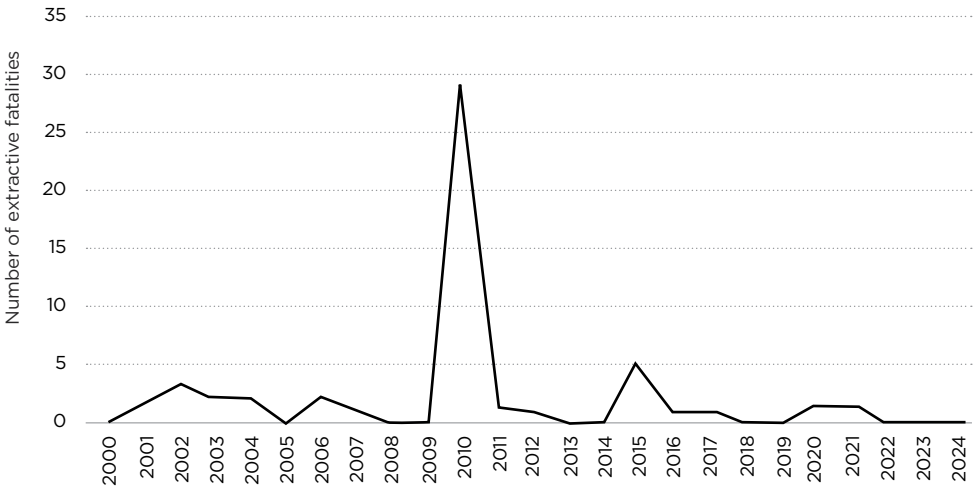


FIGURE 10: Number of fatal accidents at extractive sites

While the industry has clearly improved over time and reduced the frequency of such tragedies, there appears to be a plateau, and the industry has not continued the downward trend. Why is this?

Data can be misleading and in earlier times there was more underground mining activity that included gassy coal mines. What is clear however, is the plateau over the last 12 years indicates one fatal extractive accident per year on average. What does industry need to do to see the downward trend continue? A clue is that all of the 11 fatal accidents involved mobile plant. Nine directly, one involving the maintenance of a truck and the other a fall of ground onto mobile plant (using an excavator in a dangerous location).

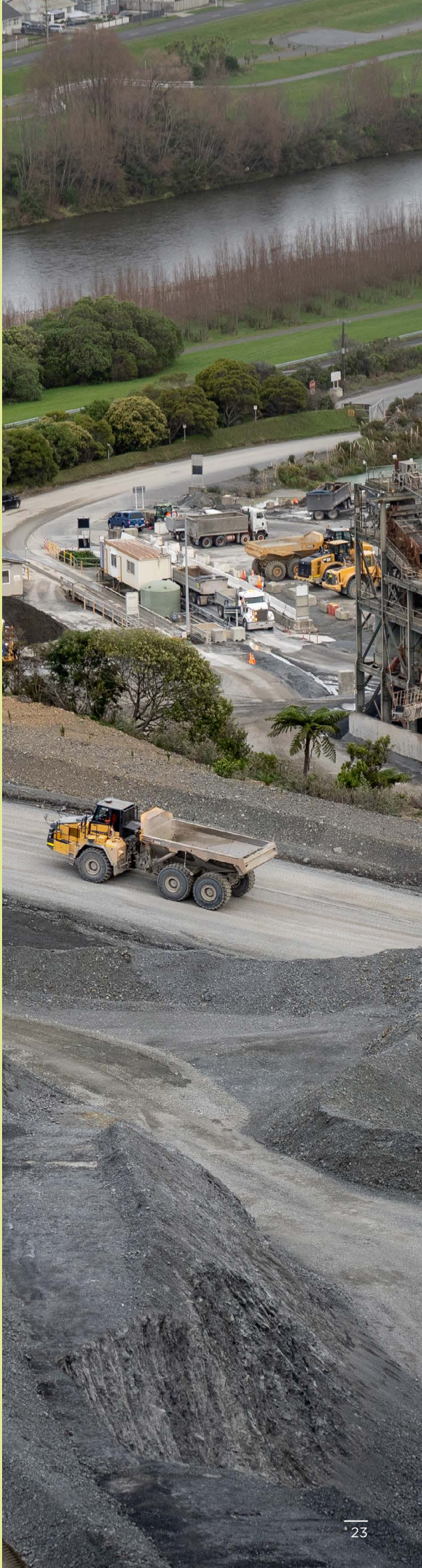
I've heard a few comments about the fatalities in recent times occurring at small operations run by family businesses. The data does not reflect this view. Some will say that in the last few years the industry has had zero fatalities; reading the incident reports for the last few years show that we came very close on several occasions.

If you agree that one fatal accident on average for the industry is unacceptable, more effort is needed to reduce this current industry average. Start with a refresh and refocus on how you manage mobile plant. Mobile plant rarely lets you down if placed in an environment that it was designed for, is maintained to OEM standards, is operated by competent people, and supported by robust procedures that everyone understands and applies consistently.

Dave Bellett
Manager Extractives

4.0
The regulator

IN THIS SECTION:



4.1 Our activities

The extractives ppecialist health and safety inspectors at WorkSafe use a range of interventions to undertake their duties. Inspectors strive to achieve the right mix of education, engagement and where required enforcement. This section of the report includes a summary of the interventions used by the xxtractives inspectors during the quarter.

4.2 Assessments

Proactive assessments aim to prevent incidents, injuries and illness through planned, risk-based interventions. Reactive activities are undertaken in response to reported safety concerns or notifiable events. Assessments can be either site- or desk-based in nature.

For proactive site-based assessments, the objectives of each visit are agreed and the appropriate inspection tool is selected. Targeted assessments and regulatory compliance assessments can take several days on site with a team of inspectors attending. These multi-day inspections may be 'targeted' to assess the controls in place for a particular principal hazard (for example, WorkSafe has been targeting 'roads and other vehicle operating areas' as a result of the high number of notifiable events in this area), or they may involve a more general assessment of 'regulatory compliance'. Site inspections and targeted inspections are generally completed in a one day site visit but can also focus on specific topics.

As well as site-based assessments, the Inspectors spend considerable time undertaking desk-based assessments. Proactive desk-based assessments include the review of Principal Hazard Management Plans (PHMPs), Principal Control Plans (PCPs), mine plans, and high risk activity notifications. Responding to notifiable events and safety concerns may involve a site-based or desk-based assessment, or both.

Table 8 shows the range of assessments undertaken in Q3 2024/25 by sector.

		ASSESSMENTS	MINE	TUNNEL	ALLUVIAL MINE	QUARRY
Proactive	Site-based	Targeted assessments				
		Regulatory compliance assessments			2	4
		Site inspections	13	1	9	20
		Targeted inspections	1	1		
	Desk-based	PHMP/PCP review	9	22		
		Mine plan review	52	8		
		High risk activity				
Reactive	Site-based	Concerns – inspection			2	1
		Notifiable events – inspection				
	Desk-based	Concerns – desk-based	6			7
		Notifiable event – desk-based	25	2	1	8

TABLE 8: Proactive and reactive site and desk based assessments conducted in Q3 2024/25

Figure 11 shows the number of proactive and reactive site- and desk-based assessments undertaken by the regulator in Q3 2024/25. This quarter 35% of our activities were site-based, and 73% of activities were proactive.

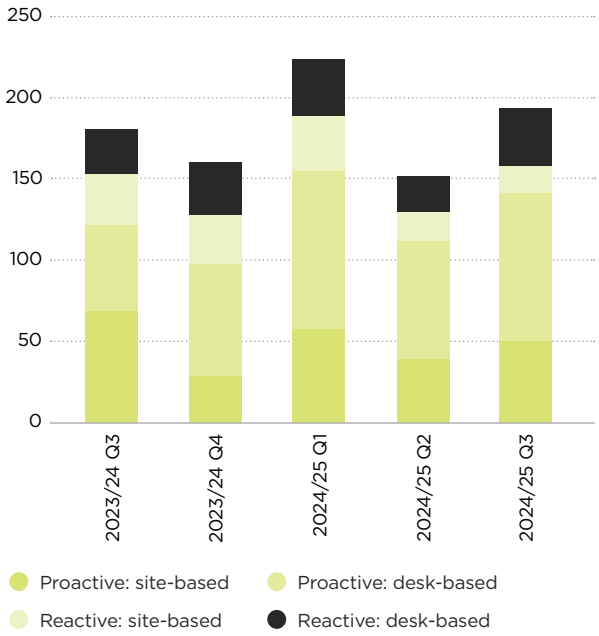


FIGURE 11:
Proactive and reactive site and desk-based assessments

Figure 12 shows the number of assessments undertaken by the regulator in Q3 2024/25 by sector. This quarter, 21% of our assessments were for quarries, 55% for mines, 18% for tunnels and 7% for alluvial mines.

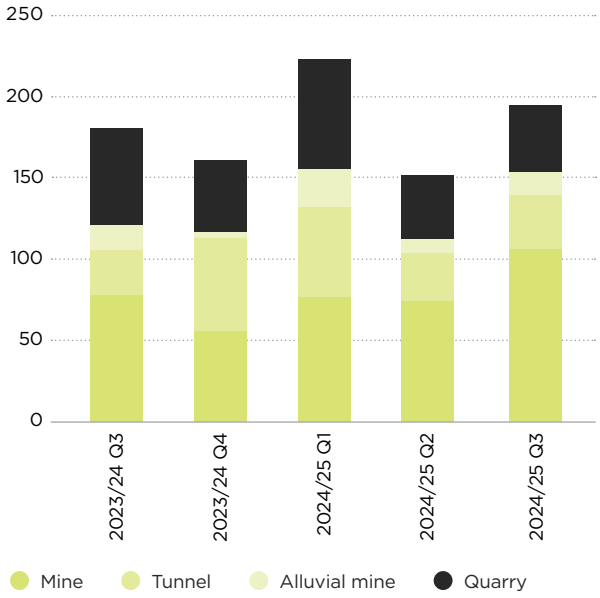


FIGURE 12:
Assessements by sector

4.3 Enforcements

Enforcement actions issued by WorkSafe include prohibition and improvement notices and directive letters. Enforcement actions are issued according to our Enforcement Decision Making (EDM) Model when health and safety issues are identified through assessments.

Figures 13 and 14 show the number of enforcement actions issued in Q3 2024/25 by notice type and by sector. This quarter, a total of 124 enforcement actions were issued. Of those, 2% of were prohibition notices, 38% were improvement notices, 60% were directives and 0% were sustained compliance letters. The majority of the enforcement actions were issued to the alluvial mining (31%), and quarrying (58%) sectors.

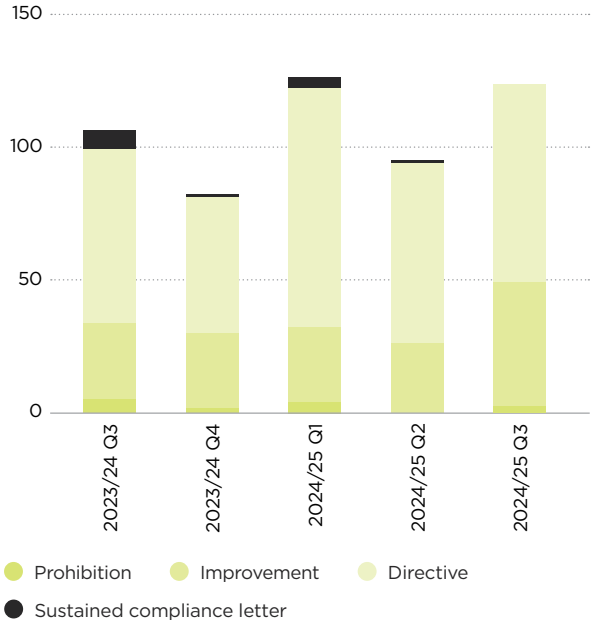


FIGURE 13: Enforcement actions issued by type

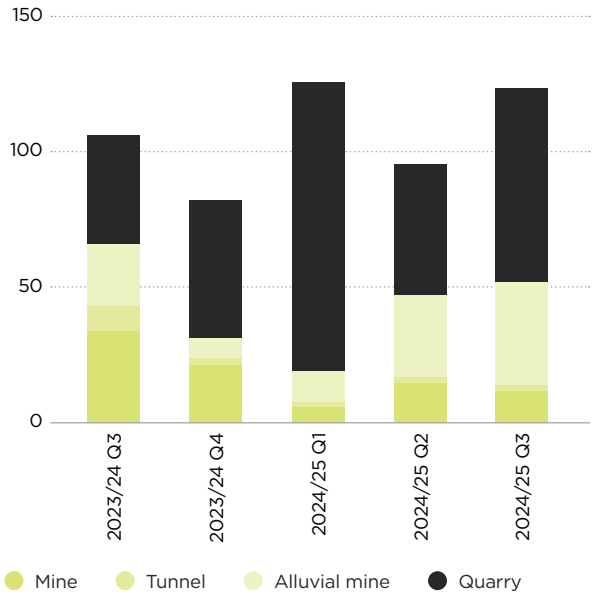


FIGURE 14: Enforcement actions issued by sector

Figure 15 shows the number of enforcement actions issued in Q3 2024/25 by category, and provides an indication of the key areas of concern to our inspectors. This quarter, the majority of enforcement actions were issued for health and safety issues relating to roads and other vehicle operating areas (11%), electrical (11%), guarding (20%), and health and safety management systems (18%).

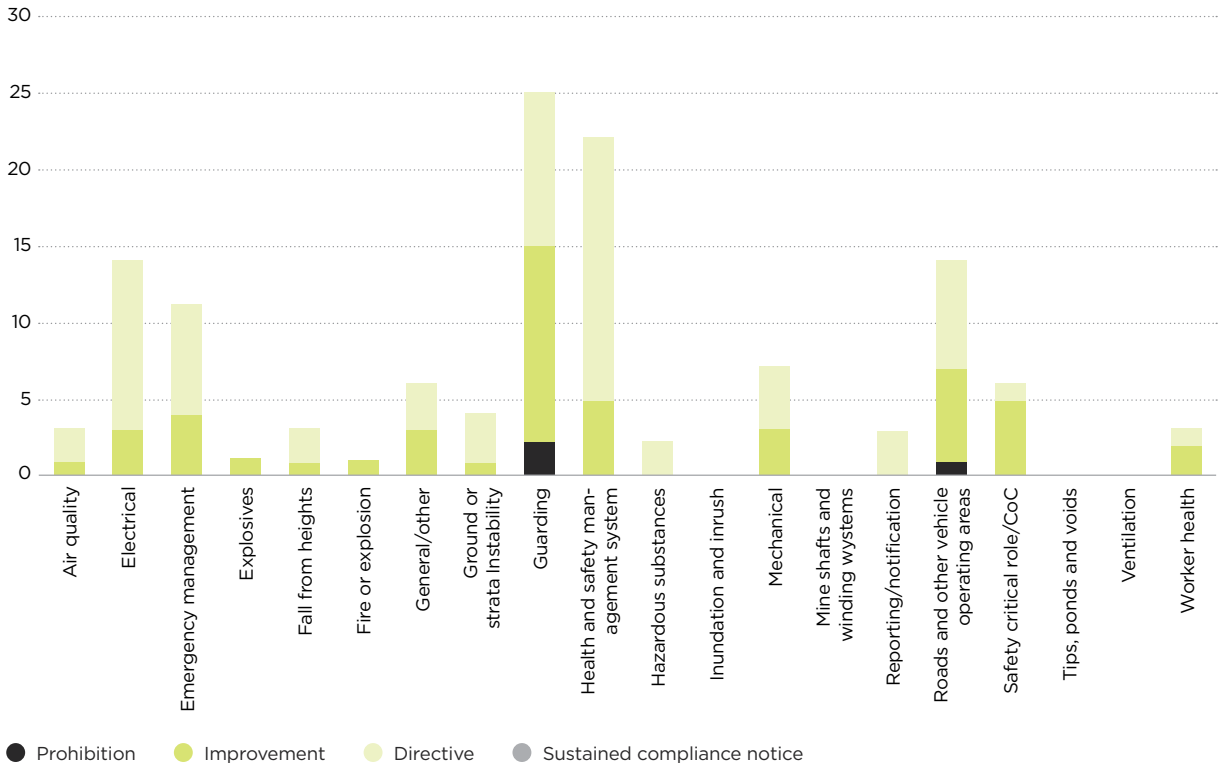


FIGURE 15: Enforcement actions issued by category 2024/25 Q3

Regulator activity comment

The number of proactive and reactive assessments undertaken during Q3 was in line with the 2024/25 operating plan. The number of inspections completed for the year to date is currently running higher than the operating plan. Enforcement activity is also consistent with the number of inspections, with most enforcement being issued in relation to Quarries or Alluvial mines. Tunnel activity has recently decreased in NZ, and there is a corresponding reduction in enforcement activity.

Notes

Disclaimer

WorkSafe New Zealand has made every effort to ensure the information contained in this publication is reliable, but makes no guarantee of its completeness.

It should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice. WorkSafe is not responsible for the results of any action taken on the basis of information in this document, or for any errors or omissions.

ISSN 2703-3392 (online)

Published: June 2025

PO Box 165, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

worksafe.govt.nz

WSNZ_4809_JUN 25

ISSN 2703-3392 (online)

WORKSAFE
Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

PO Box 165, Wellington 6140
0800 030 040 **worksafe.govt.nz**