

Extractives industry

2025/26 Q3

January to March



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

WORKSAFE
Mahi Haumarū 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 core mission is to ensure that people across New Zealand are healthy and safe at work. 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 WorkSafe Extractives team is currently finalising the 2026/27 operating plan. We are modifying the way we determine who we inspect and the number of inspections we might make at each site during the year.

We will still use a risk-based approach, which includes considering our current knowledge about each site and using factors such as how many people work at a site, the known geological conditions, mining methods, and any other factors that we consider important to risk-rank the operation.

We then set up a schedule of inspections to ensure that we inspect the highest-ranked sites as a priority and add as many lower-ranked sites as possible into our operational inspection plan.

High-ranked sites normally get multiple visits each year.

All mine sites, excluding alluvial mines, in New Zealand are inspected at least once a year. Inspecting every quarry site is not possible, as there are currently about 1,000 sites in New Zealand.

This year, we will still inspect high-ranked quarry sites at least once a year, but if the first inspection does not raise any issues, we will not complete a second inspection in the same year. We will allocate the inspection we would have otherwise undertaken to another lower-risk site.

We are also planning to add some engagement visits to our schedule. When in an area conducting planned inspections, we will occasionally allocate time for the inspector to drop into the office of any other nearby operations to engage with the operator, manager or staff who are available. We intend to have prepared material to distribute that provides guidance and advice on maintaining a compliant extractive site. An inspector will deal with any obvious issues they might observe, but the primary purpose is to engage with some of the lower risk-ranked sites that may not have had an inspection for some time.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hunt'.

Paul Hunt
Chief Inspector Extractives

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1.0

Industry profile

IN THIS SECTION:

- 1.1 Operations
- 1.2 Number of workers employed
- 1.3 Developing competence

1.1 Operations

3

Metalliferous opencast mines

Includes 1 suspended operation

21

Coal opencast mines

Includes 2 mines in care and maintenance

9

Metalliferous underground mines

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

1

Coal underground mine

1 tourist mine under care and maintenance

2

Tunnels

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

1

Coal exploration

1 operational coal exploration project

73

Alluvial mines

Number of mines that have been verified (65) or have notified of an Appointed Manager to WorkSafe (8)
Includes 2 iron sands mines

997

Quarries

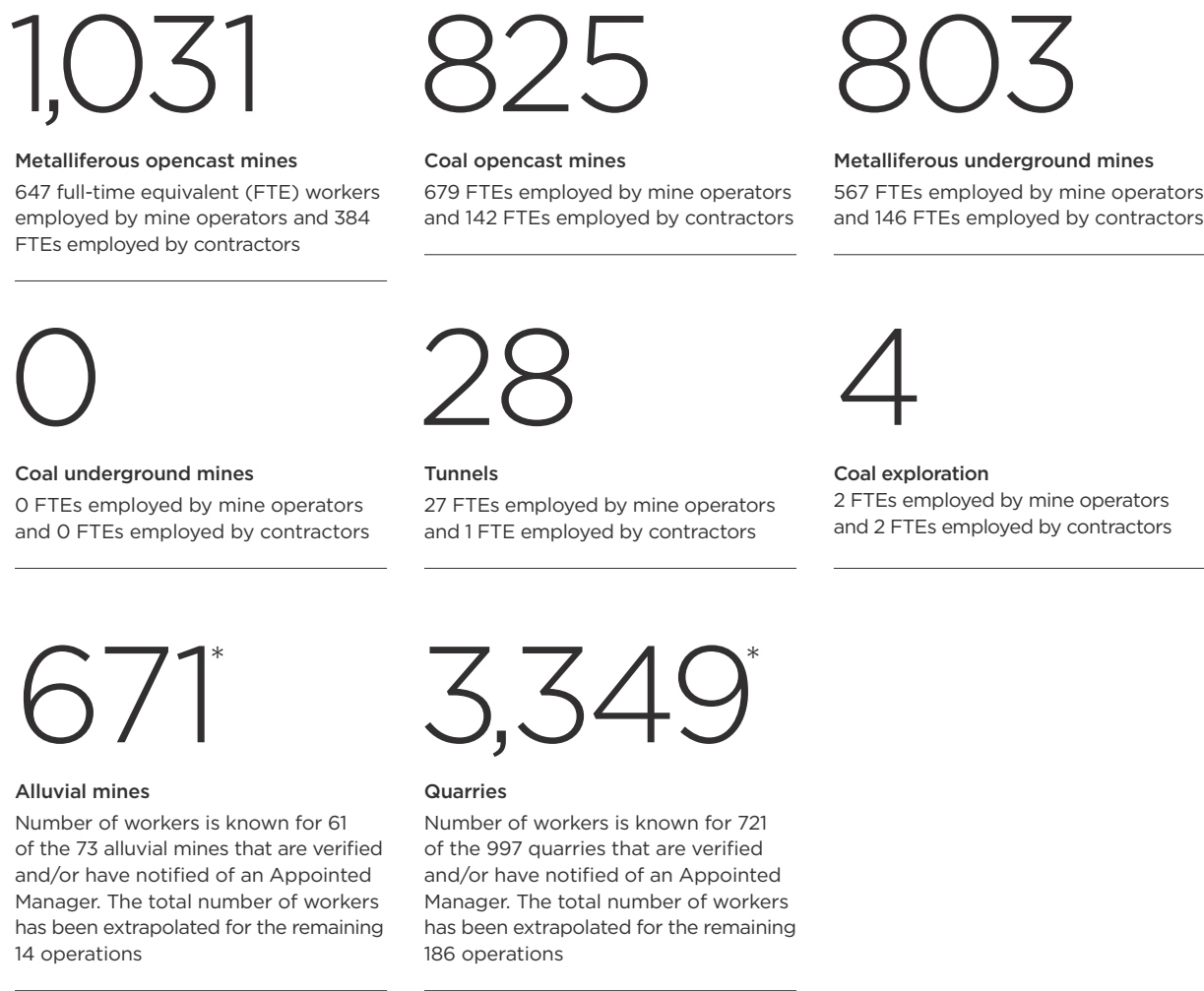
Number of quarries that have been verified (833) or have notified of an Appointed Manager to WorkSafe but not yet verified (164)

An important aspect of understanding the health and safety performance of 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 1,107 active operations in New Zealand as at the end of March 2026.

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 Number of workers employed



There were approximately 6,711 Extractives FTEs in New Zealand as at the end of March 2026. The 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 31 alluvial mining operations (42%) and 235 active quarries (24%). 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.

* Approximate number.

Figure 1 shows the total hours worked in Q3 2025/26, reported to WorkSafe in the quarterly reporting. The hours are separated into Employees and Contractors.

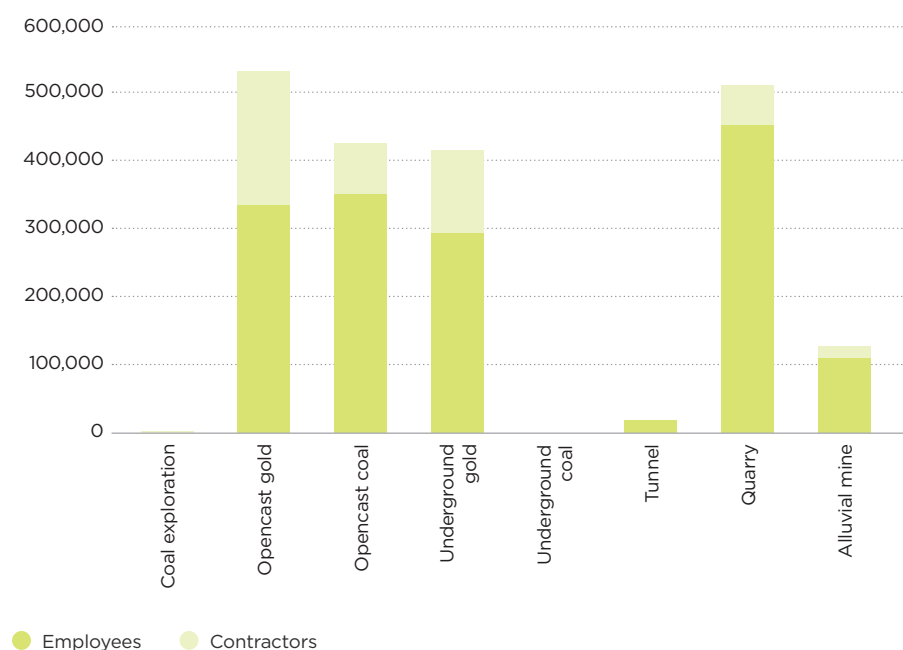


FIGURE 1:
Total hours worked by
sub-sector Q3 2025/26

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 2025/26. The hours are separated into Employees and Contractors.

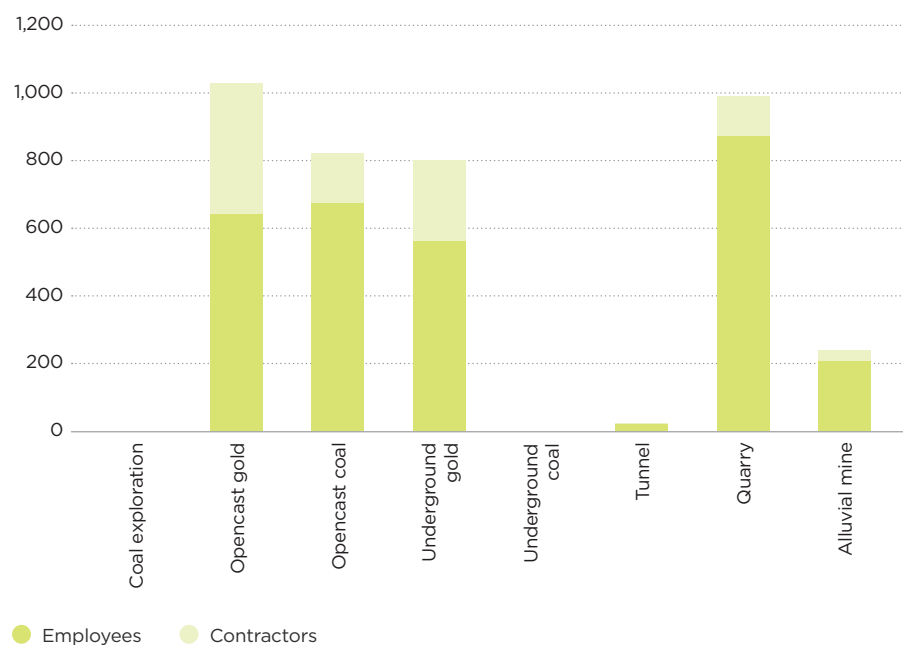


FIGURE 2:
Number of FTEs by
sub-sector Q3 2025/26

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 was very saddened to recently lose a sitting member, Mathew Vandy. The BoE would like to acknowledge the considerable contribution Matt made during his tenure. In his role at Hanga Aro Rau Workforce Development Council, Mathew helped to ensure that the extractives unit standards it controlled were a priority for review during the last few years of its existence. The BoE has expressed its sympathy to Mathew's family, while also acknowledging the high regard in which he was held by his BoE peers and by those in our industry who understood the work he had been involved in.

With changes to the way vocational education is now organised in New Zealand, the organisation that now maintains most extractives industry standards is the Energy and Infrastructure Industry Skills Board (ISB). Most extractives unit standards will be converted to skill standards over the next few years. A simple example is that all the first aid unit standards included in CoCs are already transitioning from unit standards to skill standards.

SKILL STANDARD NUMBER	TITLE	LEVEL	CREDITS	VERSION	REPLACES UNIT STANDARD
41051	Manage first aid during emergency situations	3	1	1	6400 Manage First aid in an emergency situation Expire 31 Dec 2027
41052	Administer first aid	2	1	1	6401 Provide First Aid Expire 31 Dec 2027
41053	Administer basic life support	2	1	1	6402 Provide basic life support Expire 31 Dec 2027

TABLE 1: Example of changes to first aid skill standards

All extractives unit standard changes will be straight replacements, and those people holding the old unit standards will be considered to hold the new skill standards.

While most changes are a simple update to the title and identifying number, some changes will be more complex. The existing two explosives unit standards that are prescribed in the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations – Prescribed Competency Requirements for Certificates of Competence) Safe Work Instrument (SWI) have been converted into three skill standards: one generic, one underground, and one surface. This will result in a need to update the SWI for the relevant Certificates of Competence (CoCs) to split the available skill standards between types of operation.

The BoE recently reviewed all the changes that they currently know about and estimate that at least a third of the unit standards currently prescribed will need their titles changed to reflect updated skill standards.

In some instances, the BoE will have to consider recommending to WorkSafe that certain unit standards are no longer appropriate for a CoC and that new ones are more suitable, especially where the changes are more significant than just a title update.

The BoE recognises that these types of updates can be confusing and will endeavour to keep all those currently studying for a CoC informed. The general rule is that an old unit standard will be equivalent to any new updated skill standard.

Table 2 provides a summary of oral exams conducted during the quarter.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ORAL EXAMS HELD Q3 2025/26	TOTAL PASSES	SUCCESS %
26	20	76.92%

TABLE 2:
Oral exams conducted

Table 3 provides a summary of all CoCs issued during the quarter and the current number of CoCs at the end of Q3 2025/26.

Note: We no longer report lifetime CoCs.

	TOTAL CoCs RENEWED	TOTAL NEW CoCs ISSUED	TOTAL TRANS- TASMAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENT TTRMA CoCs ISSUED	TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT CoCs
CoC TYPE	Q3 2025/26	Q3 2025/26	Q3 2025/26	
A-grade quarry manager	27	7	0	307
B-grade quarry manager	9	2	0	386
A-grade opencast coal mine manager	8	0	0	52
B-grade opencast coal mine manager	5	1	0	52
A-grade tunnel manager	2	0	0	31
B-grade tunnel manager	1	1	0	70
A-grade metalliferous mine manager	2	0	0	7
B-grade metalliferous mine manager	1	0	1	21
A-grade alluvial mine manager	0	0	0	2
B-grade alluvial mine manager	0	0	0	4
Site senior executive	5	1	0	61
First-class coal mine manager	2	0	0	11
First-class mine manager	0	0	0	20
Coal mine deputy	1	0	0	18
Coal mine underviewer	1	0	0	15
Mechanical superintendent	1	0	0	22
Electrical superintendent	1	1	0	19
Ventilation officer	0	0	0	6
Mine surveyor	1	0	0	10
Manager to manage the quarrying operation specified in the certificate (site specific)	0	0	0	4
Winding engine driver	0	0	0	1
Additional competency for work in operations that use explosives	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
Total	53	15	1	1,119

TABLE 3: Current and issued Certificates of Competence



2.0 Health and safety performance

IN THIS SECTION:

- 2.1 Notifiable events
- 2.2 Injuries
- 2.3 Types of events
- 2.4 Extractives sector focus areas
- 2.5 Regulator comments
- 2.6 High potential incidents
- 2.7 High potential incidents – investigation outcomes

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 Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, and under Schedule 5 of the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016 (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 four years and for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2025/26 for mines and tunnels (Table 4) and quarries and alluvial mines (Table 5).

MINES AND TUNNELS	2021/22 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2022/23 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2023/24 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2024/25 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2025/26 Q1	2025/26 Q2	2025/26 Q3
Number of notifiable events	20	21	22	22	26	22	23
Number of operations that notified events	11	10	11	9	9	6	7

TABLE 4: Mines and tunnels – notifiable events and operations that notified events

QUARRIES AND ALLUVIAL MINES	2021/22 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2022/23 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2023/24 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2024/25 QUARTERLY AVERAGE	2025/26 Q1	2025/26 Q2	2025/26 Q3
Number of notifiable events	14	17	18	21	15	27	19
Number of operations that notified events	13	15	17	18	14	25	14

TABLE 5: Quarries and alluvial mines – notifiable events and operations that notified events

Figure 3 shows the number of notifiable events reported to WorkSafe by sub-sector from April 2024 to March 2026.

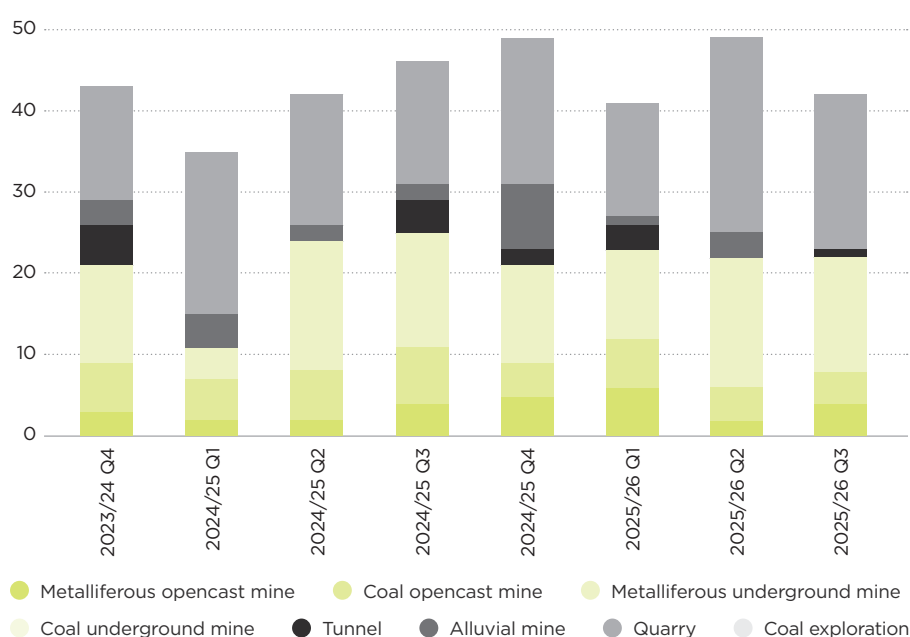


FIGURE 3:
Notifiable events
by sub-sector

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 April 2023 to March 2026. 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 2.09. Rates have fluctuated over past two years without any clear trend.

While TRIFR is not the only measure indicating the health and safety performance 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: Total recordable injury frequency rate (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% 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 14% of notifiable events in the past 12 months occurred in relation to ground, geotechnical and other structural failures.

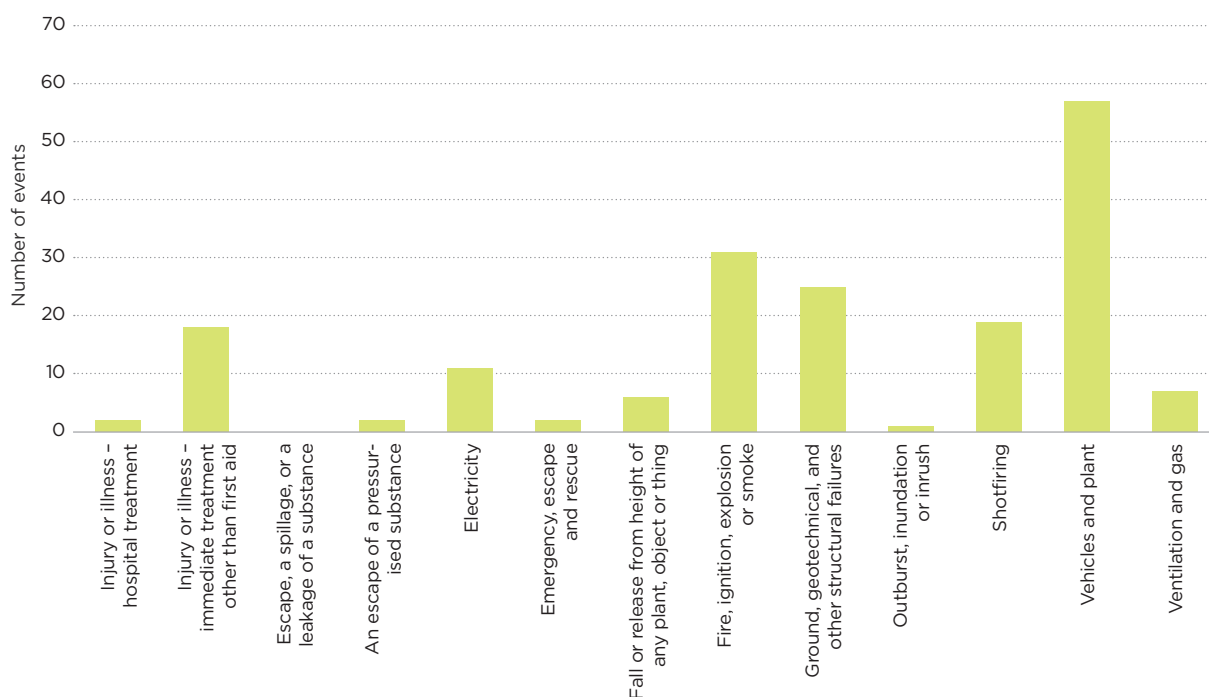


FIGURE 5: Notifiable event categories for the previous 12 months

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, 97% involved fires on plant, mobile plant or in buildings associated with mining or tunnelling activities, and 3% involved the outbreak of a fire on the surface or underground. The vehicle and plant-related notifiable events involved collision of mobile plant with other plant (54%), overturning of mobile plant (35%), and unintended movement or brake failure (11%).

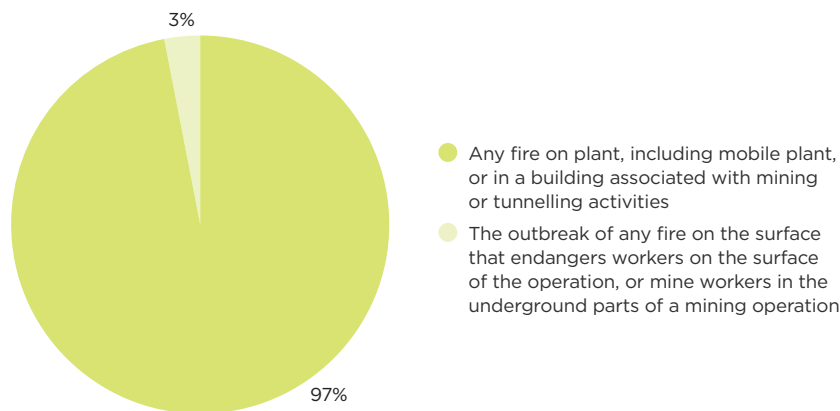


FIGURE 6:
Fire, ignition, explosion or smoke-related notifiable event sub-categories

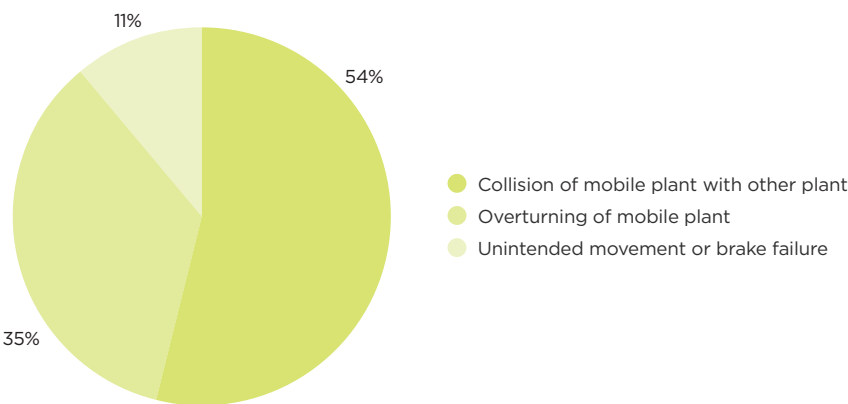


FIGURE 7:
Vehicles and plant-related notifiable event sub-categories

Consistency of reporting

Mining and tunnelling data are received from a high proportion of mining and tunnelling operations and are considered to be accurate. Notifiable events were reported by 19% of mining and tunnelling operations in the past quarter, and quarterly reports were submitted by 100% of mining and tunnelling operations this quarter.

Quarrying and alluvial mining data are received from a much lower proportion of quarrying and alluvial mining operations and are likely to be less accurate. Notifiable events were reported by 1.3% of quarrying and alluvial mining operations in the past quarter. Quarterly reports were provided by 31 active alluvial mining operations (42%) and 235 active quarrying operations (24%).

2.5 Regulator comments

Fires on extractives sites remain a significant proportion of notifiable incidents. WorkSafe is concerned that the prevention of fires is not considered a high priority for operators. Underground fires have the potential to cause a catastrophic incident, and any fire in an underground setting should be considered extremely serious. Considerable effort should be made to fully investigate the causes and to introduce new controls to prevent any recurrence. Any fire, including fires at surface operations, has the potential to cause harm, and the prevention of these fires should also be a priority.

The fact that mitigation controls, such as fire suppression systems may have contained the consequences should not be seen as evidence of an adequate system. Prevention of fires is the objective.



FIGURE 8:
The fire triangle and
fires at extractive sites

For fires to occur, three elements must be present (fuel, heat and oxygen); operators should therefore concentrate on managing heat and fuel.

Vehicle fires make up the most significant proportion of fires reported to WorkSafe. Mobile plant must be rigorously assessed in relation to fire risk, including consideration of the flammability of non-metallic components, the toxic products of combustion, the location of flammable components relative to heat sources, fire suppression systems, and the location of hand-held extinguishers. A fire risk assessment should include consideration of material quantities, flammability characteristics, and, in the event of a fire, the heat release rate and toxicity of combustion products.

There are several fire risks on mobile plant, including:

- fuel, coolant, or oil escaping onto a hot surface such as exhaust manifolds or turbochargers
- engine or turbo failure
- electrical wiring with hot joints
- high current or circuit overloading (e.g. starting, regeneration)
- interaction with high-voltage power cables
- tyre pyrolysis
- deterioration of sound and heat insulation or lagging material, or material becoming soaked with oils, fuels, or degreasing products (self-oxidative heating)
- mechanical hot joints, such as bearing failure or brake overheating.

Potential ignition sources on mobile plant include:

- heat: hot surfaces on engines, exhaust systems, and turbochargers
- electrical: discharge in motors, retarders, and transformers; short-circuit arcs; earthing faults; static electricity; and contact with high-voltage power cables
- mechanical: cutting, friction, impacts, grinding
- chemical: self-heating, auto-ignition, exothermic reactions, tyre pyrolysis.

Consideration of engineering solutions to reduce surface temperatures should be undertaken. Controls such as turbo lagging, double-skin exhausts, and water-jacketed turbos and exhausts may be available. Segregation and lagging of electrical cables to isolate them from hot surfaces or potential fuel sources is important. Lagging of hydraulic hoses is also important to minimise leakage or spraying of flammable fluids onto hot surfaces. The use of fire-resistant hydraulic fluids in high-risk applications underground is a regulatory requirement.

As well as having the potential to cause serious harm, fires also result in significant costs and production delays. All fires are preventable.

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.

Table 6 provides a summary of high potential incidents notified to WorkSafe in Q3 2025/26. The summaries are an abridged version from the operators' notification reports.

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Jan 26	A side wall collapsed onto a bogger during ore drive clean-up for ground support work. The operator was safely removed, the scene was secured, and an investigation is underway.	- Ground or strata instability - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	While the drill was setting up to drill its next hole, the ground opened up 32 m above the coal seam and the left-hand side of the drill slipped down and became stuck.	- Ground or strata instability - Tips, ponds and voids - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	An underground truck reversed out of the wash bay and struck a parked contractor's ute. No one was in the ute and no one was injured.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	A loader travelling slowly with its bucket raised collided with the cab of a customer's truck waiting to be loaded.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	A telehandler reversed into a parked light vehicle while moving an old water pump, causing minor damage to the vehicle.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	Movement of about 2 m was identified in an overburden area during a routine inspection. The area was cordoned off for engineering review.	- Ground or strata instability - Workplace inspection - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	A customer's trailer overturned while tipping off at the cleanfill area.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Jan 26	A loader reversed into a water truck while repositioning in the chip bins area. No injuries were reported.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Jan 26	Poor drainage caused the track to rut and deteriorate over time, eventually causing a truck tray to roll over.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	Coal dust ignited inside the drier during start-up, and escaping hot gases scorched the operator's head and face.	- Fire or explosion - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A partially attached grizzly bar swung free while being removed from a hopper and struck a worker's boot.	- Lifting - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	An electrician found a damaged 1000 V cable in a loading pocket while investigating a power fault.	- Electricity - Workplace inspections - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A drill rig was moved after washdown with its mast still raised and contacted overhead power lines.	- Electricity - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A failed oil line sprayed oil onto a rag left inside the engine bay near a hot turbo, causing a fire.	- Fire or explosion - Maintenance - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	During planned rehabilitation, a loader was scratching back the selected area to remove surface ground support, and during the process, the material had rilled out onto the roadway, making contact with the loader.	- Ground or strata instability - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	Movement in an overburden dump blocked a stream. A bulldozer operator left the area safely and access was closed off.	- Ground or strata instability - Tips, ponds and voids - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A digger operator uncovered an electronic booster and a dozer later uncovered an electronic detonator. The area was shut down and the shot was treated as a misfire.	- Shotfiring - Workplace inspection - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training

INCIDENT DATE	SUMMARY	CONSIDERATIONS
Feb 26	During caisson shaft sinking, the shaft was supported by 6 hydraulic cylinders while excavation was underway beneath alternate cylinders. As a skip was being lifted out, a worker climbed the extension ladder into the protective cage. The shaft unexpectedly dropped about 200 mm when the supporting material islands gave way, and the worker's left hand was caught in the sliding section of the ladder.	- Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A loader collided with a stationary forklift while operating in the work area.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	Ground deterioration was observed on a drive wall, which was reported. A bund was installed to secure the area and prevent further entry. A later inspection found the backs had collapsed about 4 m back from the brow.	- Ground or strata instability - Workplace inspection - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Feb 26	A diamond driller's vehicle rolled into a parked light vehicle while turning into a parking space. No damage was reported.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	A ground fall about 4.2 m high and 90 m ³ in volume was identified during inspection and LiDAR scanning of a known poor-ground area.	- Ground or strata instability - Workplace inspection - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	An alternator belt failed on an Mobile Manufacturing Unit (MMU) truck, damaging wiring behind a cover and causing a small fire that was extinguished.	- Fire or explosion - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	A new driver lost control of a Moxy tipper on a haul road, causing it to overturn and injure both the driver and instructor.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	A suspended set of Integrated Tool Carrier (ITC) forks dropped onto an operator's arm when the control box appears to have activated while the forks were being lowered.	- Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	A live detonator and booster were found in an ore stockpile during loading. Work stopped and the explosives were removed safely.	- Shotfiring - Workplace inspection - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	A Moxy truck reversing during tailings pond clean-up struck the digger's front window grille. No one was injured.	- Roads and vehicle operating areas - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training
Mar 26	An arc flash and fire occurred when part of an Motor Control Centre (MCC) was re-energised after a previous fire suppression release.	- Electricity - Fire or explosion - Job planning - Risk assessment - Supervision - Training

TABLE 6: High potential incidents – 2025/26 Q3

Table 7 and Figure 9 shows the number of high potential incidents per quarter during the last two years for all extractives operations.

QUARTER	Q4 APR-JUN 2024	Q1 JUL-SEP 2024	Q2 OCT-DEC 2024	Q3 JAN-MAR 2025	Q4 APR-JUN 2025	Q1 JUL-SEP 2025	Q2 OCT-DEC 2025	Q3 JAN-MAR 2026
Number of high potential incidents	29	27	35	32	32	28	32	28

TABLE 7: High potential incidents per quarter

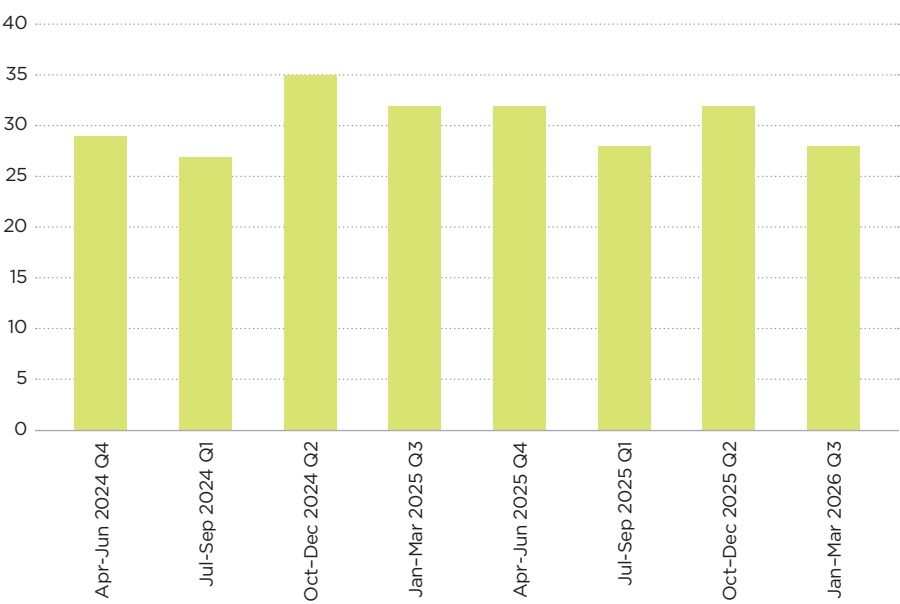


FIGURE 9:
High potential incidents per quarter

2.7 High potential incidents – investigation outcomes

Case study

Jan 26: A loader travelling slowly with its bucket raised collided with the cab of a customer’s truck waiting to be loaded.

The incident

A wheel loader collided with a stationary customer tipper truck on an internal quarry roadway. The loader bucket struck the truck cab, causing significant damage; no injuries were sustained, although the potential for serious harm or fatality was high. The truck had entered in accordance with the site’s traffic management plan and stopped when it observed the loader approaching. The loader operator was undertaking a non-routine task (dust suppression using water carried in the bucket) after addressing an overheating screening plant. During this task, the loader was driven with the bucket raised, significantly restricting forward visibility, and the operator did not see the truck. The incident occurred at low speed. Operations were stopped and the incident scene was secured immediately afterwards.

Key findings from the quarry operation's investigation

IMMEDIATE CAUSES

- Restricted visibility: The raised loader bucket created a significant blind spot in the operator's forward view.
- Loss of situational awareness: The loader operator did not see the stationary truck; the truck driver could not move clear in time.
- Assumed rather than confirmed communication: Both parties relied on visual awareness rather than positive communication (for example, radio contact).

CONTRIBUTING OPERATIONAL FACTORS

Non-routine task introduced risk

- Dust suppression using the loader bucket was not a planned activity.
- The task was undertaken within an active traffic route without additional controls.

Deviation driven by plant issues

- Screening plant overheating required water to be transported.
- Lack of a suitable water supply or system prompted workarounds and task deviation.

High traffic and shared work area

- Multiple vehicles operating in shared internal roads increased interaction risk.
- Site layout and stockpiles limited visibility and separation.

CONTRIBUTING SYSTEM AND PROCESS FACTORS

Traffic management plan

- The TMP focused on routine operations only and did not account for temporary or non-standard activities.
- There were no requirements to stop or control inbound traffic during such activities.
- Signage did not clearly set out communication expectations for visitors.

Lack of change management

- No formal process to identify and manage risk when conditions changed.
- Informal decision-making replaced structured controls.

Communication controls inadequate

- Radio use by contractors was inconsistent and not enforced.
- No requirement for positive confirmation before entering shared work zones.



FIGURE 10:
Incident scene

Regulator comments and recommendations

TREAT NON-ROUTINE WORK AS HIGHER RISK

- Changes in tasks or conditions should trigger risk assessment and additional controls.

SEPARATE MOBILE PLANT AND VEHICLES

- Physical separation should be prioritised, with controlled access where separation is not possible.

ENSURE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE

- Plans should reflect real operating conditions, including high traffic, temporary activities, and changing layouts.

MANAGE VISIBILITY RISKS

- Restricted visibility (for example, raised buckets, dust, blind spots) should trigger stop-work or traffic control measures.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION CONTROLS

- Positive communication (for example, radio use) should be mandatory, not assumed.
- All drivers and operators should confirm awareness of each other's presence before entering shared areas.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

- Sites should ensure equipment and systems (for example, water supply, dust suppression) are in place to avoid unsafe workarounds.

FOCUS ON SYSTEMS, NOT INDIVIDUALS

- Effective risk management requires robust systems that adapt to changing conditions, not reliance on operator judgement alone.



3.0 Regulatory insights

IN THIS SECTION:

- 3.1 Manager for hire and the role of the manager

3.1 Manager for hire and the role of the manager

Extractive sites will, from time to time, have a manager leave the business. Sometimes a business may be starting up and need to appoint a manager. That manager has three core functions under the Health and Safety at Work (Mining Operations and Quarrying Operations) Regulations 2016 (the Regulations) and needs to hold an appropriate Certificate of Competence (CoC).

The Regulations require the appointed manager to undertake the following tasks:

1. manage the mining operation
2. ensure there is adequate supervision of all workers and any other people at the operation to protect them from risks to their health and safety while they are at the operation, and
3. manage the health and safety aspects of the operation on every day on which a mine or quarry worker is at work.

The Regulations are often misunderstood as allowing the appointment of an unqualified acting manager. This is not the case; an acting manager is only used when the appointed manager is unavailable. That is, you must first appoint a manager.

The manager is required to hold a CoC relevant for the type of operation they are managing. For example, at a large quarry with more than four workers, the manager must hold an A-grade quarry manager CoC. Because some operations are small and seasonal, some managers who hold a CoC manage more than one operation. The Regulations allows this, provided they perform the functions listed above.

WorkSafe is aware that some operations have hired a CoC holder and appointed them as the manager, yet the CoC holder is rarely on site and does not manage day-to-day operational matters at the quarry. WorkSafe has also noted some small businesses where the company owner makes all operational decisions and retains financial control, yet does not hold a CoC. In these cases, a CoC holder may be hired in an attempt to comply with the Regulations; however, the CoC holder is not the manager in practice unless they can demonstrate that they are carrying out the functions of a manager. Therefore, hiring a CoC holder who does not perform all the functions of a manager will not meet the requirements of the Regulations.

So, what are the options when your manager leaves or you are starting a new operation and don't hold a CoC?

If an operator finds themselves without a CoC holder, the most appropriate approach is to recruit a CoC holder as the full-time manager of the operation.

Alternatively, you could appoint a manager with adequate experience but no CoC and require them to undertake training to become a CoC holder. The appointment of the manager will alert WorkSafe to the fact that the appointed manager is not qualified. WorkSafe will often require details of the person appointed, as well as information on the plan and oversight put in place to ensure the site is run safely during the period before the person gains a CoC. This process could take six months, plus additional time to sit an oral examination with the New Zealand Mining Board of Examiners. The risk of this second option is that your business will not be complying with the Regulations during the training period.



Dave Bellett
Manager Extractives

WorkSafe will consider the complexity of the site and the risks that may arise with an unqualified manager and may take enforcement action requiring the operator to comply with the Regulations by appointing a qualified manager within a specified timeframe. WorkSafe may also require additional controls to be implemented, such as oversight by a qualified person on a scheduled basis.

It is good practice to be prepared for when the manager leaves your business. WorkSafe encourages industry to identify people within an organisation who have the potential to become managers and to start them on their CoC training pathway. The more CoC holders there are in the industry, the easier it will be to recruit if a manager leaves. Investing in the next generation of managers will help avoid the 'band-aid' approach some take with a CoC 'manager for hire' who is not genuinely performing the role.

4.0

The regulator

IN THIS SECTION:

4.1 Our activities

4.2 Assessments

4.3 Enforcements



4.1 Our activities

The extractives specialist 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 extractives 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 determined by the extractives team and the appropriate assessment 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 full assessment of compliance with the Regulations. Site inspections and targeted inspections are generally completed in a one day site visit.

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.

Table 8 shows the range of assessments undertaken in Q3 2025/26 by sector.

ASSESSMENTS			MINE	TUNNEL	ALLUVIAL MINE	QUARRY
Proactive	Site-based	Regulatory compliance assessments	0	0	0	1
		Site inspections	13	1	10	43
		Targeted inspections	4	0	0	0
	Desk-based	PHMP/PCP review	16	0	0	0
		Mine plan review	27	5	0	0
		High risk activity	0	0	0	0
Reactive	Site-based	Concerns – inspection	1	0	1	2
		Notifiable events – inspection	0	0	0	3
	Desk-based	Concerns – desk-based	0	0	0	0
		Notifiable event – desk-based	22	1	1	6

TABLE 8: Proactive and reactive site and desk-based assessments conducted in Q3 2025/26

Figure 11 shows the number of proactive and reactive site- and desk-based assessments undertaken by WorkSafe in Q3 2025/26. This quarter, 50% of our activities were site-based, and 76% of activities were proactive.

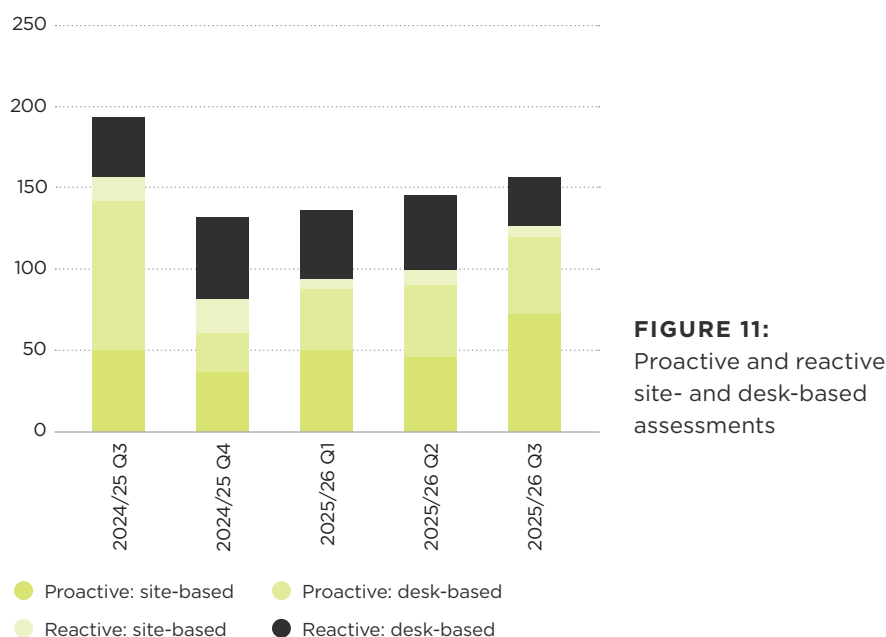


FIGURE 11:
Proactive and reactive
site- and desk-based
assessments

Figure 12 shows the number of assessments undertaken by WorkSafe in Q3 2025/26 by sub-sector. This quarter, 35% of our assessments were for quarries, 53% for mines, 4% for tunnels and 8% for alluvial mines.

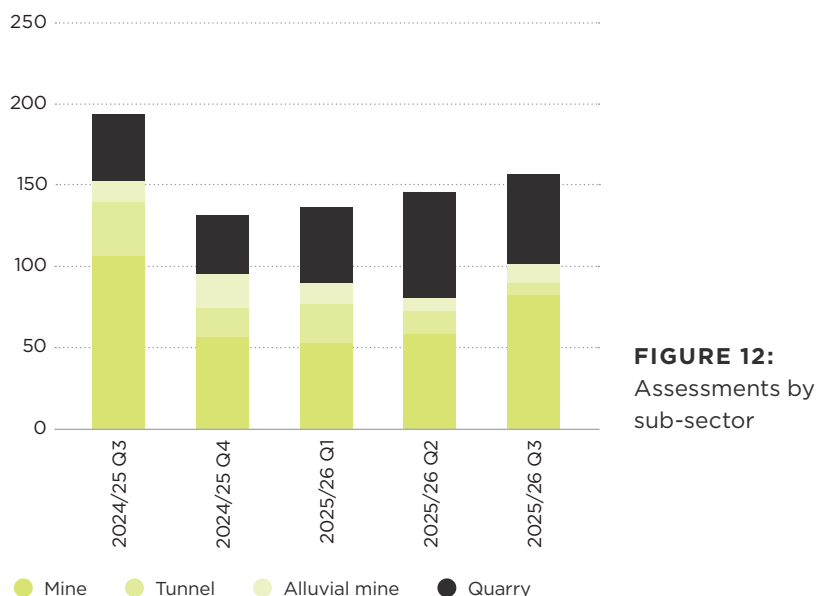


FIGURE 12:
Assessments by
sub-sector

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 2025/26 by notice type and by sector. This quarter, a total of 154 enforcement actions were issued. Of those, 6% of were prohibition notices, 42% were improvement notices, 49% were directives, and 3% were sustained compliance letters. The majority of the enforcement actions were issued to the alluvial mining (17%), and quarrying (68%) sub-sectors.

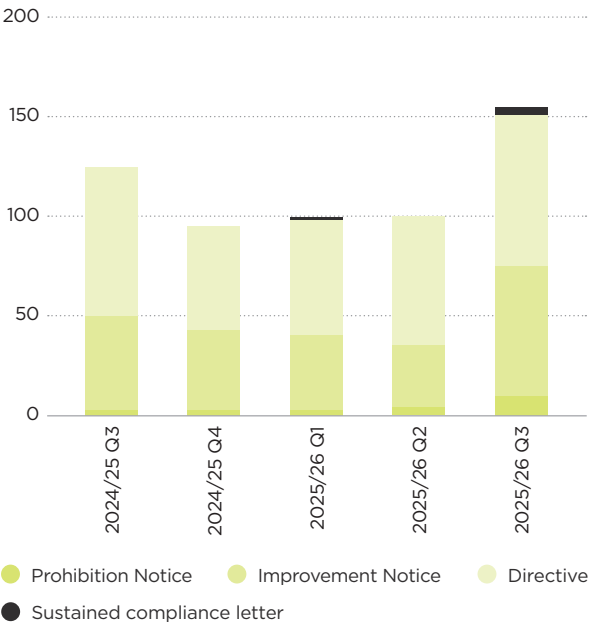


FIGURE 13:
Enforcement actions issued by type

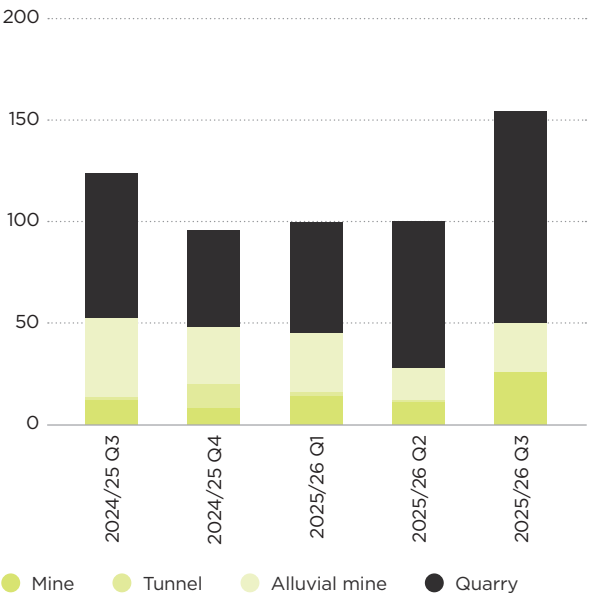


FIGURE 14:
Enforcement actions issued by sub-sector

Figure 15 shows the number of enforcement actions issued in Q3 2025/26 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 (24%), guarding (25%), and health and safety management systems (13%).

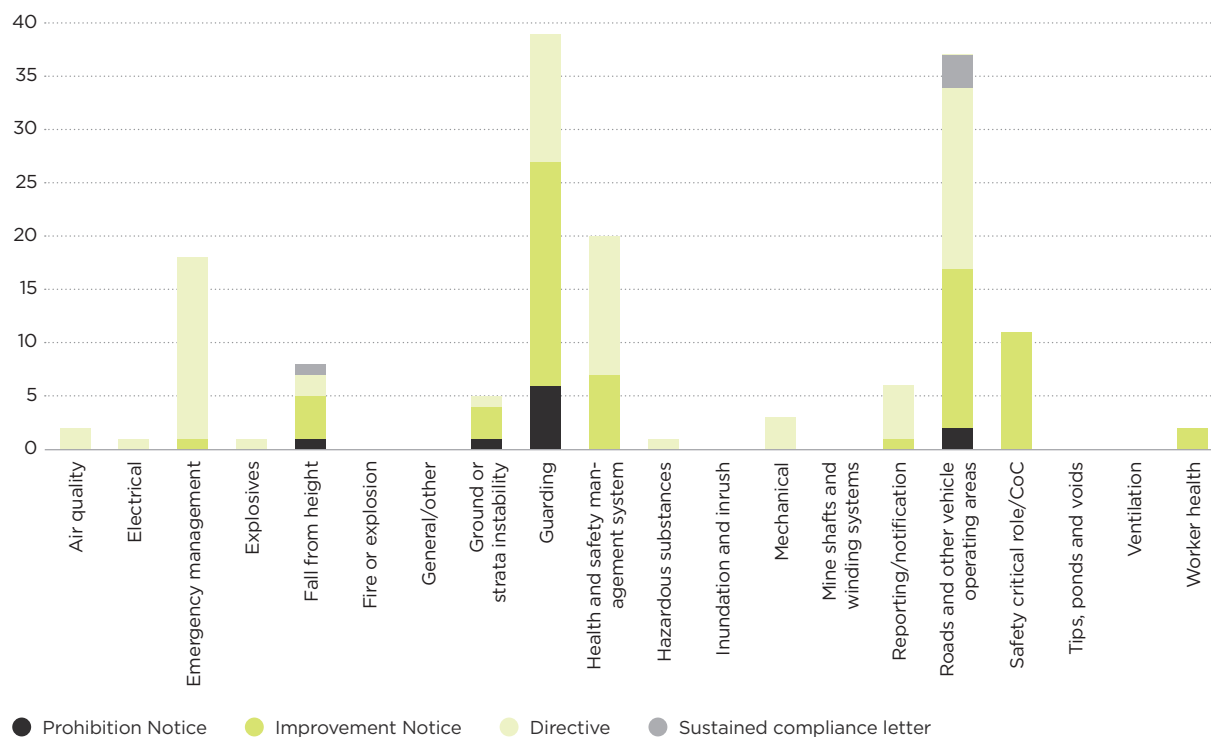


FIGURE 15: Enforcement actions issued by category 2025/26 Q2

Regulator activity comment

After completion of the first three quarters, assessment numbers are higher than planned for the year, with 192 completed. Above-plan numbers are expected to continue until the end of Q4 in June 2026.

Disclaimer

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