



To: Principal Employer/ Registered Manager/ Alternate Registered Manager/
Underground Manager/ Alternate Underground Manager/ Quarry
Manager/ Alternate Quarry Manager / Exploration Manager

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: COVID-19 UPDATE FROM THE STATE MINING ENGINEER

Following recent confirmation of positive COVID-19 cases in the WA mining industry, to limit the spread of this infectious disease the State Mining Engineer is reminding all WA mining operations they are required to:

- Appoint an “Infectious Diseases Manager”. This person should regularly check the Australian Health Department and the WA Department of Health websites for up-to-date information on COVID-19 status, actions and restrictions and be able to verify the vaccination status of workers.
- Implement an “Infectious Diseases Management Plan” applicable to the specific location, resources and facilities of the site(s).

In preparing this plan you should consider all the information and recommendations of the Department of Health in relation to mitigating the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19. For example, considering the appropriate approach to delivering social distancing in mess areas, mask wearing, etc.

The plan should also include how mining operations can safely continue if there is the need for key personnel (officers in statutory positions) to undergo periods of isolation – reliance on the potential for an exemption from the Chief Health Officer is not an appropriate continuity response.

- Ensure all staff cooperate with and follow the directions of Department of Health officials, including contact tracers when required.
- Ensure all resource workers that work in rural and remote locations, remote operations centres and mission critical operational locations are fully vaccinated from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Public Health Direction issued on 5 October 2021.
- Ensure systems are in place to restrict access to Aboriginal communities to essential personnel only.

Consistent with maintaining a safe working environment, including one free of psychosocial hazards, consideration needs to be given to the impacts on the mental health of workers that could arise if a period of isolation in their quarters is required or their roster is modified (<http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/COVID-19-Managing-modified-26937.aspx>).



Whilst compliance with the directions of the Department of Health officials is critical, it is important to be conscious these directions do not obviate the requirement for compliance with the Mines Safety and Inspection Act.

The Mines Safety Inspectorate will be paying particular attention to the steps being taken to ensure that the safety management systems are being adhered to and will take enforcement action if it is considered appropriate.

Reporting requirements for positive cases on WA mine sites

The presence of COVID-19 on a mine site has the potential to cause serious harm to health. Like other potentially serious occurrences, notification is required to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) in accordance with section 79 of the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act (WA) 1994*.

To clarify when notification is expected, the following reportable vs. not reportable breakdown has been provided:

Must report

- person(s) is on site, has positive test result (Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)) and may have interacted with other site workers resulting in isolation of some or all of workforce on site- report as soon as known and provide details of the number of affected workers and actions taken and planned.
- person(s) has been on site in last seven days, has positive test result (RAT or PCR) and may have interacted with other site workers resulting in isolation of some or all of workforce offsite or onsite - report as soon as known and provide details of the number of affected workers and actions taken and planned.

Not reportable

- person(s) has not yet mobilised to site, has positive test result (RAT or PCR) and is in isolation offsite/ under instruction from Health Department and not permitted to attend site.
- person(s) has not reported for work and has reported that they have “flu like” symptoms, they are isolating (either onsite or offsite) from others, they have not been tested or are awaiting test results.

Vaccination status of WorkSafe Mines Safety inspectors

In accordance with the WA Government’s vaccination mandate for all frontline employees, all WorkSafe Mines Safety inspectors are required to be double vaccinated and booster vaccinated (after becoming eligible). DMIRS has implemented protocols to ensure that all inspectors meet this mandate.



Any WorkSafe Mines Safety inspector that attends a WA mine site will be in compliance with this requirement and as such further requests for vaccination status should not be required.

More information on mandatory vaccinations and Critical Government Regulators Directions is available at www.wa.gov.au

Verification of resource worker vaccination status

A number of DMIRS inspectors have been authorised by the Chief Medical Officer for the purposes of determining compliance with the Resource Industry Worker (Restriction on Access) Directions (No 2). These officers are authorised to request information to verify resource worker vaccination status. Sites should have systems in place to verify compliance to facilitate a compliance audit.

DMIRS continue to collaborate with the WA Department of Health on COVID-19. If further clarification is required please do not hesitate contacting the duty inspector on 1800SAFEMINE (1800 723 364) who will direct your enquiry to the appropriate subject expert.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Chaplyn'.

Andrew Chaplyn
State mining engineer

3 February 2022