

Occupational noise management in mining

MANAGING NOISE

Occupational noise-induced hearing loss is the biggest compensable disease in Australia. The annual national compensation cost is estimated to be more than \$A30 million. The real cost of noise is probably ten times the estimated compensation cost.

The mining industry is a 'high risk' industry and employees are often exposed to high noise levels. Noise management should be a key component of any risk management program.

NOISE CONTROL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995 contain comprehensive noise control regulations governing the management of occupational noise in mining operations.

Legal responsibilities placed on employers include:

- reduction of workplace noise to as low as practicable levels
- assessment of workplace noise by an approved noise officer within a specified timeframe
- development and implementation of a noise control plan
- reduction of employee noise exposure by implementing engineering and administrative noise control measures
- providing employees with hearing protective devices such as earmuffs and earplugs, including appropriate information, instruction and training on their use and maintenance
- marking of noise hazard zones by display of safety warning signs
- providing employees with appropriate information on the risks to hearing associated with exposure to excessive noise and implementation of proposed noise control measures
- regular assessment of employees' exposure to noise.

'BUY QUIET' PROGRAMS AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Complementary duties are placed on designers, manufacturers and suppliers regarding the availability of quieter products and information about the risks of noise overexposure associated with the operation and use of their products.

For advice on health matters in relation to mining or to advise changes in contact details for the MineHealth card, contact Resources Safety on 9358 8461, email contamanager@dmp.wa.gov.au or visit www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety

