

# The Mineralogical Society's "Safe Work Methods Statement"

Abbreviated as "SWMS"

The Australian mining industry is one of the most heavily legislated industries across the country. Legislation in all states makes the mine operators responsible for all people who enter areas under their control. This includes confirmation of their mode of operation and work practices.

## **SWMS Purpose and Scope**

The SWMS is a guideline in assessing risks, developing risk controls and putting in place or reviewing workplace practices and procedures. The Society's SWMS deals specifically with Field Work.

## **What does the law require?**

- The Mine operator must prepare a Mine Safety Management Plan stating how the occupational health and safety of all persons will be protected (Section 27).
- No work directly related to mining is to be carried out unless:
  - the Mine Safety Management Plan is implemented, and
  - the Emergency Plan is implemented (Sections 28 and 43).
- The Mine operator is to ensure that the Mine Safety Management Plan is complied with on site. This includes contractors (Section 29).

*The Acts: Mine Health and Safety Act 2004. Mine Health and Safety Regulation 2007. Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000. Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001. Explosives Act 2003. Explosives Regulation 2005. Fossicking and prospecting are specifically dealt within NSW under Section 12 of the Mining Act 1992 and Clause 12 of the Mining Regulation 2010.*

The critical word above is "Contractors". Contractors must provide their SWMS before entering a site. This SWMS must comply with the Mine Safety Management Plan. A SWMS must be written specifically for each site. The Society enters a site at the same level of requirements as a "Contractor".

## **How the Society implements its Safe Work Methods Statement.**

Two generic documents cover a number of situations encountered in field trips:

Part A "Generic Guidelines to Collecting Minerals in Mines and Quarries".

Part B "Generic Safe Work Methods Statement"

Both documents assess a situation, identify possible hazards and provide methods of control. Each hazard is rated on a risk matrix and then the rating is reviewed when controls are used to minimise or eliminate the hazards.

A third document called "Safety Operations Procedure" is a plain English version of both SWMS above and includes additional scenarios that are not part of the SWMS as they may be specific only to a particular site. All documents are under constant review, updates and changes.

## **How is the SWMS used**

These documents are used to create site specific SWMS's using parts relevant to the site visited. Additional sections may be added to a site specific SWMS on the request of the site mine operators.

Members are asked to complete a multi-choice open book questionnaire of some 60 questions to become compliant with the SWMS. Members also have the option to write 30 of their own questions and answers and become a reviewer/technical advisor. The member also has the option to provide an alternate answer to any question based on their encounters or experience.

The qualifying statement is that questions must be answered in the spirit of the document.

## ***Members, Guests and Visitors on field trips may be:***

- 1) **A DEEMED COMPETENT PERSON**, a member who has read the SWMS document and completed a basic questionnaire. Usually 1 or 2 pages.
  - i) They are not compliant and may need supervision.
  - ii) Are allowed on field trips but may be excluded from manager commercial quarries and mines.
  - iii) Need to comply with all PPE requirements.
  - iv) No certificates are issued to a “deemed competent person”.
  - v) They are recorded as competent for the current financial year only.
- 2) **A COMPLIANT PERSON**, a member who has completed the SWMS multiple-choice questionnaire.
  - i) They are named members listed before the Management Committee as fulfilling the SWMS requirements.
  - ii) They are compliant members following the SWMS guidelines.
  - iii) They can participate in all Field trips including managed commercial mines and quarries for a period of 3 years after completing the SWMS questionnaire.
  - iv) A “Certificate of Compliance” will be issued for a period of 3 years.
- 3) **A COMPLIANT TECHNICAL ADVISOR**, a member who has had daily involvement of using SWMS in their work place. This includes retired members who have been subject to or involved in preparing SWMS in their work place.
  - i) Provides a statement of work-place experience or qualifications.
  - ii) The member must have completed the SWMS multi-choice questionnaire.
  - iii) Has completed requirements for a Compliant Person.
  - iv) A “Certificate of Compliance” will be issued for a period of 3 years.
- 4) **A COMPLIANT REVIEWER**, a member who has completed the SWMS Reviewer questionnaire.
  - i) A “Certificate of Compliance” will be issued for a period of 3 years.
- 5) **Ordinary members** not compliant or competent, **guests and visitors**.
  - i) Must be seconded and supervised by a compliant person.
  - ii) Restrictions or exclusions may apply on some field trips.

In addition to being SWMS compliant, the following conditions must be met before entering a commercially managed mine or quarry.

1. Compliant members must be a current financial member.
2. All attendees must wear the following Personal Protective Equipment:

- Hard hat
- Safety glasses
- Long sleeve shirt
- Long trousers (no dresses, tights or shorts allowed, some sites ban denim jeans)
- Gloves to be worn in working areas
- Safety boots steel capped, no elasticized boots

The SWMS is used by the Society to enter commercially working mines and operating quarries in future field trips. Only members certified as compliant in the site specific SWMS document can attend the stated field trip.

In addition to the general induction that is completed as part of the participant registration process, a site and Field Trip briefing must be completed at the commencement of each Field Trip by each participant.

- Read the Field Trip Briefing Guide and comply with any document or instruction issued by the host company  
and
- have completed prior a signed “Safety in the Field” sheet  
or

- be deemed competent with the Safety Operations Procedure (SOP)

or

- certified compliant with the Society's Safety Works Methods Statement.

The appropriate level of safety awareness will be determined after the Field Trip Coordinators negotiations with the landowners, custodians, and lease holders of the field trip site. Multiple documents may be necessary for different commercial sites and abandoned mines and quarries.

All members, guests and visitors may register and attend field trips to non-commercial and abandoned mines, quarries and mineral occurrence sites. Registration to managed commercial mines and quarries may specifically state that only certified compliant members can attend.

To date, twenty-three members have completed their SWMS documentation, which is the majority of members who regularly attend field trips.

If you want to complete the Society's SWMS questionnaires or join the Field Trips Group, please contact Edward Zbik: e-mail: [etzed@optusnet.com.au](mailto:etzed@optusnet.com.au) or phone: (02) 9638 6586.