

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. All members entering a commercial mine site must be certified.

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.

To Qualify for Certification for 3-year duration

First Time Certification: Answer multi-choice questionnaire with comments.

Re-Certification: Answer multi-choice questionnaire with comments.

How is the SWMS used?

The SWMS is used by the Society to gain entrance to commercial Mine Sites. Names and details collected are provided to third parties who allow access onto their properties, mining leases and exploration tenements.