

Scenario 10

Mining workplace

Example scenarios for managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work



The control measures you choose must suit the organisational and worker needs and effectively control the risks to the highest level that is reasonably practicable. Below is an industry-specific scenario example featuring common psychosocial hazards and risks, example controls and approaches to maintain, monitor, review and achieve continual improvement of the risk management approach.

Scenario context and work content

A trainee truck driver with nil previous mining experience has commenced work with a large open cut mine. The trainee has just been signed off to drive solo in the haul truck and works twelve hour shifts on a rotating roster of day and night.

Recently the trainee operator has been asked to drive in the rain by the supervisor to meet production demands. The trainee has indicated they do not feel confident about this, but the supervisor instructs them to start driving no matter the conditions. The trainee operator has asked for additional support from the trainer for driving in wet conditions, but this has been ignored. The trainee is not sure what to do in this situation and is not able to find any guidance in the induction material they were given. They have noticed some conflict in the workplace and do not want to make things worse for themselves.

Psychosocial hazards and risks

Low job control - The trainee has only recently commenced at the mine and does not feel empowered to speak up in fear of losing their employment.

Poor role clarity - the trainee is not aware of the responsibilities and the requirements of their position at this stage of their training.

Poor support - the supervisor appears dismissive of the trainee's concerns about operating in the wet, and there appears to be little information on additional training and support when driving in wet weather.

Role underload - The task of driving a haul truck is monotonous and repetitive.

Poor workplace relationships -the trainee wants to avoid any additional conflict with their supervisor as there is already conflict in the workplace.

Psychosocial controls

To manage **low job control, poor role clarity and poor support**, the mining operator reviews the overall performance of its safety management system including training and supervision to ensure:

- all workers are empowered to seek assistance and help if they need more help to learn and or complete a task.
- all workers are aware of the escalation processes if they feel that they are not resolving an issue with their supervisor.
- supervisors of trainees receive additional training on managing young and inexperienced workers, including on support networks available.
- supervisors and trainees are aware of the requirements of their position during training.
- a system is available for mentors or 'buddies' to provide additional support and clarity to trainees.

Role underload was reviewed in combination with the mine's WHS management plan to develop a specific learning and training program which sets goals and progression.

Review and improve

The organisation will:

- review and update the mine safety management system, and health control plan to ensure information on the management of psychosocial hazards is up to date and regularly reviewed.
- seek and review feedback from trainee operators about what could be done to improve the training process for trainee truck drivers and operating in wet conditions. This review will consider whether role clarity and expectations of trainees has improved.
- undertake a review of workplace behaviour grievances to identify areas of conflict.

Refer to SafeWork NSW's [Code of Practice Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work](#) for more information or [Designing Work to Manage Psychosocial Risks](#) which also includes four case studies illustrating organisational and team level work design, and team and task level work design.