No images? Click here

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety

WorkSafe Western Australia Mines Safety

Monthly incident insights

WorkSafe Mines Safety

September 2025 edition

Issued 15 October 2025

180 notifiable incidents in September

149 reportable incidents in September

13 notifiable incidents compared to August

5 reportable incidents compared to August

3 Three summarised incidents in this edition

Note: Correct as of 14 October 2025.

Report a notifiable incident to **1800 678 198**

Report all incidents online SRS – Safety Regulation System

Recent prosecutions

Mining contractor fined $540,000 after fatal rock fall

An underground mining contractor has been fined $540,000—and ordered to pay $8,414 in costs—after an October 2022 rock fall in a ventilation shaft at the Hamlet Underground Gold Mine near Kambalda, which killed a driller and injured a probationary offsider.

On 5 September, RUC Mining Contractors Pty Ltd pleaded guilty in the Kalgoorlie Magistrates Court to two counts of the same offence—exposing a worker to a risk of death, injury or harm to health, contrary to sections 19(1) and 32(1) of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*. Although the charges didn't allege that the breaches caused the fatal incident, they

reflected failings in risk management. Magistrate William Yoo imposed on RUC Mining Contractors, which Gold Fields Australia Pty Ltd engaged to conduct raise bore-drilling work at the Hamlet Underground Gold Mine—part of its St Ives Gold Mine—a single fine of $540,000 for the two counts.

There's an information sheet that advises how to reduce the risks associated with raise-boring activities in underground mines.

Read the media release | Read the prosecution summary

Reportable incidents

Fly rock almost hits worker within blast exclusion zone

Drone footage reviewed the day after a scheduled blast revealed that fly rock almost hit a worker positioned within an exclusion zone.

Preliminary findings showed the shotfirer and their assistant were located within the exclusion zone—160m from the blast when the site mandates at least 500m as a critical control—pre-blast inspection and siren runs were completed and blast guards were placed.

Immediate actions included suspending drill and blast activities, preserving the scene, reporting the incident to the relevant parties—site senior executive, mine management and WorkSafe—conducting a meeting to reiterate the exclusion zone to workers and initiating an Incident Cause Analysis Method investigation.

Key takeaways

- Adhere to exclusion zones—Workers must respect these boundaries, even when performing operational tasks such as siren runs.
- Conduct pre-blast checks and verifications—Multiple methods (for example, visual, electronic and drone monitoring) enable workers to confirm physical locations and procedural compliance.
- Suspend operations and preserve scenes—Essential to meet reporting requirements, support investigations and prevent recurrences.
- Reinforce critical controls—Training and safety meetings should raise awareness and increase compliance with vital measures.

Unconventional approach contaminates potable water system

Chemicals contaminated a potable water system after an emergency fire hydrant was used to flush a modified caustic line via a hose.

A modified attachment point included a welded socket and nipple that allowed the connection of a chemical hose to a fire hydrant, which wasn't standard procedure on the site. High-pressure caustic entered the water line, generating back pressure in the potable system. The issue was identified when discolouration appeared in the crib room's tap water. Work was stopped immediately and the system was flushed.

No workers were injured. However, the incident highlights how deviating from standard procedures, using incorrect equipment and bypassing engineering controls can cause serious health risks.

Key takeaways

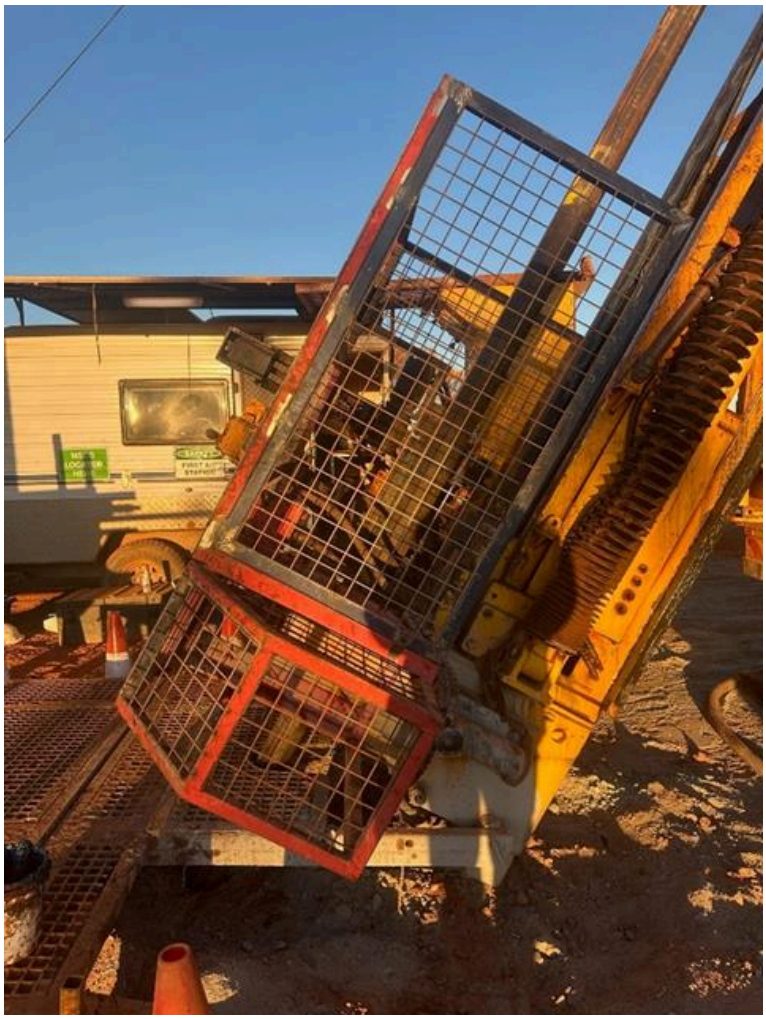
- Use correct procedures and equipment—Workers should only operate fire hydrants to assist with responding to emergency situations.
- Assess risks and verify controls—Statutory supervisors must review and approve assessments of high-risk tasks, while valves, pipes and potable water systems should be identified and protected.

- Prevent unauthorised access—Fire hydrants and firefighting equipment should only be accessible to emergency response personnel.
- Run training sessions—Operators must ensure workers performing high-risk tasks are knowledgeable of hazards and procedural requirements.
- Conduct regular inspections and audits—Potable and non-potable water lines should be identified, labelled and tested.

Proactive inspection identifies inadequate rod cage guarding

A proactive inspection as part of a WorkSafe Mines Safety campaign identified inadequate guarding of a rod cage on an exploration drill, a hazard associated with several serious incidents.

During the inspection, Mines Safety staff discussed broader risk trends—including dust and chemical exposure, plant operation and maintenance, travel management, manual handling and heat stress—with site personnel. They reinforced the need for compliance with exclusion zones and isolation procedures, adherence to original equipment manufacturer instructions, completion of pre-task risk assessments, supervision for high-risk maintenance tasks and implementation of controls to prevent slips, trips and falls.



Following the inspection, the operator upgraded the guarding to meet the standard required to stop both inadvertent and deliberate access to the rotating drill rods. Furthermore, they modified the rod cage and worktable table layout to reduce entanglement risks.

Key takeaways

- Guard moving parts and comply with laws—Regulation 208(3) of the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 stipulates that bypassing or disabling of the guarding, whether deliberately or accidentally, must be as difficult as is reasonably practicable.
- Conduct risk assessments—All maintenance and high-risk tasks should be evaluated if no documented procedure exists, with competent supervisors contributing to pre-start discussions.
- Deploy skilled personnel—Only trained workers or supervisors should operate or maintain drill rigs.
- Address broader hazards—Consider dust, travel, manual handling and various environmental risk factors.

- Use safe systems of work—Fit-for-purpose equipment, clear work procedures and site-specific hazard controls are essential.

In case you missed them

Visit www.safetyline.wa.gov.au/incident-summaries to view previous editions.

Follow us on socials

Visit www.worksafe.wa.gov.au to learn more about us.