



April 18, 2022

Ref: 116093

Karina Sangha  
Chief Auditor  
Mine Audits Unit

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Dear Ms. Sangha,

Thank you for your audit report entitled *Worker Protection in Mobile Equipment Near Water* (the audit report).

One of the primary responsibilities of the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (the Ministry) is to create the regulatory conditions and provide oversight that protect employees and all persons on mine sites from undue risks to their health and safety as a result of engaging in their work. The Ministry thanks you and your team for taking on this first audit related to worker health and safety, which I am pleased to note is also your first audit as Chief Auditor. Congratulations on this accomplishment.

Safety is a top priority for the B.C. mining industry and requires ongoing dedication from all involved, including the Ministry. As noted in your audit report, operating mobile equipment near, or on water at a mine site is unavoidable in some circumstances, and may have serious consequences if incidents occur. The Ministry takes the results of this audit seriously, particularly given the fatalities associated with this type of work. As such, the Ministry accepts all three of your recommendations. Audits like this help us identify areas of improvement and they allow us to evaluate current systems to ensure that we align with best practices.

Since 2016, the Ministry has taken several actions to support continuous improvements to the health and safety oversight at mine sites, including:

- The creation of the Mines Health, Safety and Enforcement Division, with support from a \$20 million investment ([Budget 2019](#)) over three years to hire additional inspectors. This division is responsible for implementing the mining compliance and enforcement program, which includes health and safety oversight for workers.
- The [amendments](#) to the *Mines Act* (2020), creating separate statutory decision makers for health, safety, and enforcement (the Chief Inspector of Mines), and permitting (the Chief Permitting Officer), which ensures worker health and safety at mine sites continues to be prioritized.

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- The establishment of the [Standing Code Review Committee](#) in 2019, with representation from Indigenous communities, labour, and industry. The Committee's primary objective is to review the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia (the Code), in light of evolving trends, to ensure strong protection for health, safety, and environment at mine sites. The committee completed its first revision of the Code in 2021 and continues work to make further revisions.
- The development and implementation of innovative digital tools to aggregate and centralize data for mines, supporting robust and transparent regulatory oversight. This includes publishing [Weekly Dangerous Occurrence Summary Reports](#) and modernizing the tracking and storage of incident-related files in 2019, as highlighted in the audit report.
- The establishment of a dedicated and specialized in-house training program for inspectors to provide continuous development related to implementing their regulatory oversight roles for mines, including worker health and safety.

The Ministry has developed an action plan (Appendix A) to respond to the three recommendations in your report, which includes:

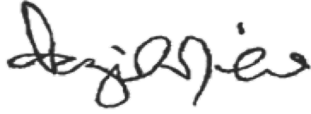
- a formal request to the Standing Code Review Committee to undertake a review of the Code in consideration of your findings and recommendations to propose revisions that will provide comprehensive protection for workers operating mobile equipment near water. The committee has accepted the Ministry's request. (Recommendation #1)
- release of a Chief Inspector's Interim Directive to support consistent interpretation and application of the current requirements to protect workers on mine sites today. (Recommendation #1)
- review of the internal process for managing incident reporting and updating it as necessary. (Recommendation #2)
- clarification of the purpose of health and safety outreach and education tools and when each is to be used to increase awareness of emerging safety concerns. (Recommendation #3)

I believe these actions will contribute to the Ministry's ongoing efforts to support and improve worker health and safety at mine sites in B.C.

Mining is one of the [safest heavy industries](#) in the province, with lower overall injuries than other sub-sectors in 2020. This has been a consistent trend for over a decade and is attributed to the cooperative efforts of mine employees, mine management, unions and the Ministry. Given this safety record, I am confident in our ability to work with our partners to improve protections for workers operating mobile equipment near water at B.C. mines.

The Ministry appreciates your team's hard work and dedication to this audit. We congratulate the entire Mine Audits Unit on this second thoughtful and important report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fazil Mihlar', written in a cursive style.

Fazil Mihlar  
Deputy Minister

Attachment: Appendix A – Ministry Action Plan