Safety performance in the Western Australian mineral industry

Statistical summary

- There were five fatal accidents during 2005–06, two were underground at nickel mines, one was underground at a gold mine, and one was on the surface at a gold mine.
- There were 442 LTIs during 2005–06, 37 more than the previous year (425 injuries in 2004–05).
- The overall LT duration rate deteriorated slightly by 4% during 2005–06, rising from 19.4 to 20.2.
- The overall LTIFR improved slightly by 2% during 2005–06, falling from 4.2 to 4.1.
- The overall injury index deteriorated slightly by 1% during 2005–06, up from 82 to 83.
- Serious injuries in the mining industry during 2005–06 totalled 349, which is more than for 2004–05.
- There was an average workforce of 56,405 employees in 2005–06; an increase of 10% over the previous year (51,207 employees in 2004–05).
- The overall serious injury frequency rate improved slightly by 3% during 2005–06, falling from 3.2 to 3.1.
- The iron ore sector LTIFR deteriorated by 9% during 2005–06, rising from 2.2 to 2.4.
- The bauxite and alumina sector LTIFR deteriorated by 20% during 2005–06, falling from 5.2 to 3.0.
- The gold sector LTIFR deteriorated by 13% during 2005–06, rising from 3.9 to 4.4.
- The nickel sector LTIFR improved by 16% during 2005–06, falling from 7.0 to 5.9.

Fatal accidents 2005–06

- A project manager died after becoming trapped between the trays of two haul trucks at a gold mine. One of the haul trucks had broken down and another haul truck was being manoeuvred into position to enable jumper cables to be connected to re-start the disabled haul truck. The manager was standing on the cab deck of the disabled haul truck directing the driver of the other haul truck who was watching the manager’s hand signals in order to get as close as possible. The manager was looking down and as the gap between the vehicles narrowed his head was caught and crushed between the trays of the trucks.
- A senior charge-up operator died in an underground gold mine after a rock weighing about one tonne fell from the back, striking his head, shoulders and back. He was assisting another drill jumbo operator during ground support operations and was in the process of placing a split set rock bolt into a boom of the twin boom drill jumbo when the rock fell from behind an area of mesh that had not been pinned to the back.
- An electrician was electrocuted while attempting to rectify a dewatering pump to working condition in a pump chamber in an underground nickel mine. A supervisor found the deceased lying face up on the floor in front of the open pump, starter box with a plastic termination shield and a re-inverter nearby. A subsequent inspection of the pump starter box identified that the pump circuit was switched at the time of the accident.
- A senior charge-up operator received fatal injuries when an explosion occurred while he was attempting to assemble an impact canton adjacent to a hung up ore pass in an underground nickel mine. The deceased had intended to use this canton to fire an explosive projectile into the ore pass. Evidence indicates that the projectile detonated in the barrel of the canton.
- A blast hole drill operator received fatal injuries when an explosion occurred while he was driving out of the back of a truck parked near an open pit gold mine workplace. Two drill rods protruding from the tail of the parked truck speared through the operator’s window and struck him, causing massive injuries. The operator was treated at a hospital but succumbed to his injuries two days later.