



MINE EXPLOSIVES SECURITY ALERT

Date 20/12/2007

▶ WHAT HAPPENED

Through information received, a joint investigation was conducted by New Zealand Police and a mining company into the possibility that several kilograms of packaged explosives had been stolen

▶ INVESTIGATION

Several security concerns were identified.

Although there was a magazine stock recording system and records were kept of the quantity of explosives used in each blast, it was still possible for missing explosives to go undetected.

Magazine records of packaged explosives were being recorded to the nearest kilogram by estimate (no scales available to staff) giving an opportunity for undetected theft of small amounts each time explosives were returned. A number of employees had authorized access to the magazine.

The Police investigation established that some employees had criminal convictions and some gang connections.

The quantity of explosive used in each blast was not very accurately recorded.

▶ RECOMMENDATIONS

Magazine records must accurately show the quantity of new stock in, the stock issued and the explosives returned.

An accurate statement of the amount of explosives used should be on each blast record, and at least once a week these should be reconciled with magazine records, (measured weights or boxes and counting cartridges in open boxes).

Persons appointed to be in charge of the magazine are responsible for maintaining records as well as for security of the magazine while they are in possession of the key.

Although criminal conviction does not in itself preclude persons from working with explosives, steps must be taken to ensure that employees with authority to handle explosives are trustworthy and competent. During recruitment it is advisable to contact applicants' previous employers for character references and for verification of employment history. Reliable information for safe storage and use of explosives can be found in Australian Standard AS 2187 and employers should ensure that they comply with the relevant provisions of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.

Increased terrorism risk highlights the need to ensure explosives security