

New safe drilling guidance published

Forty industry professionals were given an outline of the Coal Authority's new drilling guidance at an engagement event at its Mansfield headquarters.

[Guidance on managing the risk of hazardous gases](#) is designed to protect drilling operatives, the public and property.

Serious incidents have occurred in the past, with deaths linked to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide, methane, hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide, are the most common hazardous gases found in mine workings, with hydrogen being less common.

Dr Stuart Walker, Principal Manager of the Coal Authority's Permitting and Licensing Team, said:

Drilling and piling into coal measures can present many hazards for both site operatives and any properties in close proximity to a site and unfortunately incidents still occur.

The different drilling methods can all pose a risk in different situations and the guidance details the risks associated with mine gases and provides practical advice on how these can be managed.

The updated guidance is a reminder to anyone carrying out drilling work within coal measures that they should consider mine gases as part of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment that takes into account the potential effects on wider public safety and surrounding property.

Operations to investigate, treat or disturb such features should only be planned and undertaken by suitably competent persons.

We are advising all companies who are involved with drilling and piling on the former coalfields to familiarise themselves with the new guidance.

The new guidance updates a document produced in 2012, which was developed following a number of serious incidents that resulted in toxic gas entering properties during or following the investigation and treatment of former coal

mine workings.

This original guidance was written following a collaboration between the Coal Authority, the Health and Safety Executive, the British Drilling Association, the Federation of Piling Specialists, and the Association of Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Specialists.