

Miner interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for miner roles are heavily weighted toward safety competence and practical judgement, since a single lapse can have serious consequences underground or around heavy plant. Expect a mix of process checks, behavioural questions and on-the-spot scenarios, often run by a panel that includes a supervisor and a safety or HSE representative.

- **Safety process:** Checks whether you can accurately describe mandated procedures such as lockout-tagout, confined-space entry or ground support checks, step by step.
- **Behavioural:** Draws out real examples of hazard identification, fatigue management or working under a roster, using past conduct as a predictor of future performance.
- **Scenario / judgement:** Presents a hypothetical mid-shift situation, such as a change in ground conditions, to test decision-making under pressure and knowledge of escalation paths.
- **Technical / licensing:** Confirms your equipment experience, ticket currency (drill rig, LHD, explosives) and understanding of the difference between underground and open-cut methods.

Most panels open with a short overview of the site and roster, then move through safety process questions first since these can disqualify a candidate on their own. Behavioural and scenario questions follow, and the interview usually closes with a check of your current tickets, medical/fitness-for-work status and availability for FIFO/DIDO or residential rosters.

1. Walk me through the lockout-tagout procedure you'd follow before carrying out maintenance on a stalled load-haul-dump vehicle.

Why they ask

LOTO failures are a leading cause of serious injury around mobile plant, so panels test whether the sequence is second nature rather than something you'd have to think through on the day.

How to structure your answer

Give a clear step-by-step walkthrough in the correct order: isolate, lock, tag, verify zero energy state, and confirm before any colleague begins work.

Example answer

"I'd first notify my supervisor and the operators nearby that the LHD is being isolated. I'd shut down the engine, apply the park brake, and isolate the battery and hydraulic energy sources at the isolation points. I'd fit my personal lock and tag with my name and the date, then test the controls to confirm there's no residual movement before starting work. Only once I've personally verified a zero energy state would I proceed, and I'd remove my own lock once the job is finished and I've checked the area is clear."

2. Tell me about a time you identified a hazard that others on your shift had missed.

Why they ask

This tests whether you actively look for hazards rather than just following instructions, and whether you know how to report and escalate.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation, the specific task or risk, the action you took to raise and address it, and the result for the crew or site.

Example answer

"During a pre-shift inspection I noticed water pooling near a drainage point that hadn't been logged on the previous handover. The situation suggested a possible drainage blockage that could affect ground stability nearby. I reported it immediately to my supervisor rather than waiting for the next scheduled check, and we got the maintenance crew to clear it before it became a bigger issue. The site avoided any unplanned downtime and the fix was logged as a good catch in the shift report."

3. You're operating a drill rig and notice the ground conditions have changed since the start of the shift. What do you do?

Why they ask

This probes judgement under pressure and whether you'll stop work and escalate rather than push on to keep production numbers up.

How to structure your answer

Talk through the decision in order: what you'd observe, what you'd stop doing, who you'd notify, and how you'd confirm it's safe to resume.

Example answer

"I'd stop the drill and step back to assess rather than continuing on assumption. I'd look for cracking, unusual sounds or shifts in the face and check my instrumentation readings against the start-of-shift baseline. I'd radio my supervisor and the geotechnical or ground control team straight away, and I wouldn't resume drilling until they'd inspected the area and given the all-clear. Production pressure doesn't change that sequence for me."

4. What licences and equipment tickets do you currently hold, and how do you keep them current?

Why they ask

Confirms you can legally and safely operate the plant the role needs from day one, and shows whether you take ongoing compliance seriously.

How to structure your answer

State the specific licences and equipment you're certified on, then explain your process for renewals and refresher training.

Example answer

"I hold a high risk work licence covering load-haul-dump operation and a drill rig ticket, along with my Standard 11 induction. I track renewal dates against the site's training calendar and book refreshers before they lapse rather than waiting to be chased up, since I'd rather stay ahead of it than be pulled off plant mid-roster."

5. How do you manage fatigue and communication across a long shift roster, especially on a FIFO or DIDO arrangement?

Why they ask

Fatigue is directly linked to incident rates in mining, so panels want to know you have a personal system, not just good intentions.

How to structure your answer

STAR works here too: give a specific example of a demanding roster, the fatigue management steps you took, and the outcome.

Example answer

"On a run of night shifts I kept a consistent sleep window during the day, used the site's fatigue self-assessment before each shift, and flagged to my supervisor on one occasion when I felt below my usual alertness rather than pushing through. He rostered someone to cover the higher-risk task that shift, and I made up the ground the next night once I'd recovered. It meant no one was operating plant while fatigued, which is the outcome that matters most."

6. How do you stay across changes to WHS regulations and site-specific procedures?

Why they ask

Mining is a heavily regulated industry and procedures change after incident reviews or regulator updates, so this checks whether you'll adapt rather than rely on old habits.

How to structure your answer

Describe your ongoing process for staying informed, then give one concrete example of a procedure change you adopted.

Example answer

"I read every toolbox talk and safety bulletin at shift start rather than skimming it, and I ask questions if a change isn't clear to me. When our site updated its confined-space entry procedure after a regulator review, I went through the revised permit system with the safety officer before my next confined-space task rather than assuming the old process still applied."