

Vending on Mine Sites: A Hidden Compliance Risk

CEH Vending | Bowen Basin | How informal vending arrangements create unmanaged risk, and how we fix it

The problem, put simply. Most vending machines on mine sites got there informally. A worker asks a leader if they can install a vending machine, a machine gets put in, they refill it before, during or after their own shift. It's convenient, but it puts an unmanaged, untracked activity onto a controlled, safety critical site.

The four risks

The exposure	Why it's a problem for the site
1 Restocking isn't in the SHMS or under it's own SHMP	Transporting stock and refilling machines is a work activity happening on a controlled site, but it isn't captured under any Safety and Health Management Plan. There's no risk assessment, no controls and no oversight of it. In most cases the SSE doesn't even know the task is being done uncontrolled.
2 The task sits outside the worker's role and training	Whoever refills the machine was onboarded for a different job. The refilling and any repairs usually fall outside their competency record, outside hours of work controls and outside the site's fatigue management plan. It's usually done before, during or after their actual shift with no supervision.
3 No electrical test and tag	Machines get placed with no test and tag process and usually not on the site test tag register. Everyone just hopes an electrician on site gets to them at some point. That leaves unverified electrical equipment sitting on a safety critical site.
4 Nobody owns the machine	Site access depends on the worker's job. When they move on, the machine tends to get sold to someone else on site, and after a while nobody actually knows who owns it or who to call when there is a fault or issue.

How we fix all four

- **Equipment:** every machine is registered and documented, with electrical test and tag done on a schedule and the records kept. No relying on hope.
- **Process:** we run a proper refilling procedure with its own risk assessment and controls, written so it can go straight under our own SHMP.
- **People:** the work is done by trained, inducted people under proper contractor management and site access with a direct supervisor that knows what work is being completed, not a worker fitting it in around their actual job when their usual supervisor may not even be on site.
- **Accountability:** there's one owner and one point of contact for every machine and every fault. Every machine has our company name and contact details displayed. Nothing ends up orphaned.

The result is simple. What was an invisible liability with nobody accountable becomes a managed arrangement the site can stand behind and point to.

