

Site Visit Report

The site visit process is a sample on a particular day of an installation's compliance with some of its licence conditions. Where non-compliance against a particular condition has not been reported, this should not be construed to mean that there is full compliance with that condition of the licence.

Instructions and actions arising from the visit shall be addressed, or where applicable noted, by the licensee in order to ensure compliance, to improve the environmental performance of the installation and to provide clarification on certain issues.

The licensee shall take the actions specified to close out the non-compliances and observations raised in this Site Visit Report.

The licensee may also be requested to provide a response to the Environmental Protection Agency (hereafter referred to as the Agency) in relation to the site visit report findings.

Licensee	
Name of Installation	Boliden Tara Mines Limited
Licensee	Boliden Tara Mines Designated Activity Company
Licence Register No.	P0516-04
CRO Number	33148
Site Address	Knockumber, Navan, Meath, C15 NH63
Site Visit Reference No.	SV33332

Report Detail	
Issue Date	07/01/2026
Prepared By	Dylan Potter

Site Visit Detail			
Date Of Inspection	12/11/2025		
Time In	13:10	Time Out	15:30
EPA Inspector(s)	Dylan Potter		
Additional Visitors			
Licensee Personnel and Role	Paschal Walsh - Director of Sustainability Ailish McCabe - Environmental, Health and Safety Manager Mick Smith - Head of Maintenance Colm Byrne - Head of Process for AG Mill Mark Clinton - Mill Control Room Operator Connor Gaffney - Environmental Engineer Eimear Reilly - Assistant Scientist, Meath County Council		

> Summary

On 12/11/2025, Boliden Tara Mines Designated Company (the licensee) Industrial Emissions (IE) Licence Reg. No. P0516-04, notified the Agency of a failure of the tailings pipeline on the Knockumber mine site (Incident Ref. No. INCI031562). Following the notification of the incident, the Agency conducted a site visit to investigate the release of tailings from the pipeline failure to the surrounding ground.

The licensee was found to be non-compliant with its licence at the time of the Agency site visit. Two non-compliances were recorded in relation to uncontrolled release of tailings and failure to implement preventative actions to prevent recurrence of the incident.

The issues raised require action to be taken by the licensee as specified in this report and in compliance investigation ref. CI002064. The licensee is required to submit a response to the non-compliances raised in this site visit report within 30 days of the date of issue of this report (using the 'Make a Response' link on the Site Visits page in EDEN), as outlined in the Follow-up Actions section of this report.

> Site Areas Inspected

The following areas were inspected during the site visit:

- Tailings pipeline;
- Site surface water pond;
- AG Mill Control Room; and,
- Surface water ponds.

> Documents Inspected

The following documents were inspected prior to the site visit:

- Incident Report ref. no. INCI031562.

> 1. Site Specific Issues

	Answer	Condition Number	Non Compliance	Observation
1.1	Incident INCI031562	Checked	1.5	Yes
Comment / Action Required				

On 12/11/2025, the licensee notified the Agency of an incident (Ref No. INCI031562) regarding an uncontrolled release of tailings on the licenced site due to a failure of the tailings pipeline. Following the notification, the Agency conducted a site visit at the Knockumber mine site. The Agency inspected the location of the incident and the area where the pipeline failure had occurred. Tailings was observed coating the drainage ditches on either side of the nearby access road (Photographs 1, 2, 3 and 4 refer). Tankers were present at the site of the incident pumping water from the drainage ditches for disposal in the Tailings Management Facility (TMF) (Photograph 5 refer).

The licensee explained that the differential pressure alarms had been activated at 05:30 on 12/11/2025, and the AG mill went into shutdown at 05:36. The pipeline was then flushed out with water to prevent blockages. The licensee then conducted a walkover of the pipeline, during which they discovered the location of the failure. At the time of the failure, the licensee was backfilling and the content of the pipeline consisted of fine tailings and water being pumped at a rate of approximately 2,000m³/hr. The licensee estimated that the fine tailings accounted for approximately 5% of the contents of the tailing pipeline with the rest being water. It was later estimated that between 250 to 300 tonnes of tailings solids were released to the surrounding area due to the failure of the pipeline.

This is non-compliant with Condition 1.5.

The licensee also informed the Agency that the drainage ditch beside the pipe was connected to a culvert that drained to the site surface water pond. To prevent further mobilization of the tailings and water, the licensee constructed two berms, one within the drainage ditch in front of the culvert and the other beside the road (Photographs 6 and 7 refer). The Agency inspected the site surface water pond and observed that the water was grey in colour and some of the vegetation was stained with a grey material (Photographs 8 and 9 refer). The licensee took a sample at a manhole upstream of the site surface water pond, which was observed to be clear in appearance (Photograph 10 refers). Prior to the Agency arriving onsite, the licensee took a number of samples from the surface water ponds onsite to determine if there was any evidence of contamination as a result of the incident. Subsequent results from these samples received by the Agency under Incident Report INCI031562 indicated that there was no evidence of contamination in the surface water ponds and the results were within the licence limits for emission to water at emission point ref. no. SW1. The licensee explained that after passing through the site surface water ponds, the water would drain to the reclaim water ponds in the mine water pond system.

The Agency inspected the reclaim water ponds but could not identify any evidence to suggest that tailings had entered the system (Photograph 11 refers). The licensee also informed the Agency that the water in the reclaim pond was normally reused in the mining process or treated in the wastewater treatment plant before being discharged via surface water emission point SW1.

While the Agency was onsite, an external contractor arrived to investigate the cause of failure and to repair the pipeline. The licensee explained that they intended to repair the pipeline in the following two days and restart the AG mill gradually. Meanwhile, the licensee would continue to tanker the pooled carrying water to the TMF and subsequently begin to excavate the affected soil over the following weeks, which would also be brought to the TMF for disposal.

Action Required:

The licensee shall continue to respond to actions issued under Compliance Investigation CI002064 in relation to this incident.

1.2

	Answer	Condition Number	Non Compliance	Observation
Corrective actions	Checked	2.2.2.10 (ii)	Yes	
Comment / Action Required				

The licensee has previously reported incidents in relation to the failure of the tailings pipeline over the last ten years, with failures and release of tailings occurring on 17/08/2016, 16/12/2020 and 17/12/2022 (Incidents ref. no.'s INCI010698, INCI020143 and INCI024477 refers). A compliance investigation C1002064 was opened to address these failures. To date, the licensee has replaced and integrity tested the tailings pipeline and reclaim pipeline from the TMF as far as the north bank of the River Blackwater. However, the licensee failed to implement adequate preventative measures to prevent recurrence of this issue for the length of pipelines located within the mine site.

This is non-compliant with Condition 2.2.2.10 (ii).

During the site visit, the Agency expressed their concerns regarding the potential for recurrence of pipeline breaches at the mine site and emphasised the risk to surface water. After the site visit, the licensee provided the Agency with details of short-term, medium term and long-term action plan to address the failures with the pipelines under INCI031562 and C1002064. Since the site visit, the licensee has carried out the following short-term actions:

- Replaced the failed pipeline section and resumed site operations;
- Tankered all pooled carrying water away from the site of the incident;
- Sent the failed pipeline section for integrity testing; and,
- Began works to remove and replace the affected soil at the site of the incident.

Action Required:

The licensee shall continue to carry out the corrective actions outlined under their short-term, medium-term and long-term plan submitted under INCI031562 and C1002064.



Photographs



Photograph 1: Tailings in the area around the pipeline failure.



Photograph 2: Drainage ditch on near side of access road



Photograph 3: Drainage ditch on far side of access road



Photograph 4: Drainage ditch on far side of access road



Photograph 5: Tankers extracting tailings-carrying water



Photograph 6: Containment berm beside access road



Photograph 7: Containment berm in drainage ditch



Photograph 9: Site surface water pond



Photograph 10: Grey staining on vegetation in site surface water pond



Photograph 11: Water sample from upstream of site surface water pond



Photograph 11: Reclaim pond number 1

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The licensee is required to complete the actions outlined in this site visit report within the specified timeframes. Where required, the licensee shall also respond to actions specified in Compliance Investigations and/or submit a response to this site visit report via the EDEN system. The licensee shall maintain a documentary evidence, for review by the Agency, that the prescribed actions were completed within the required timeframe.

(i) Compliance Investigations

The Agency may generate a Compliance Investigation through the EDEN system and issue instructions and actions to the licensee. The licensee will receive notification when an instruction or action is issued and the licensee must respond to the actions within the Compliance Investigation within the specified timeframe.

(ii) Response to Site Visit Report

Where the licensee is requested to (or wishes to) respond to the Agency in relation to this site visit report, the licensee may select the 'Make a Response' link on the Site Visits page in EDEN where a .pdf document containing the response can be attached and submitted. The response should include details of the actions taken by the licensee to address the issues raised in this site visit report and the target completion dates. This Licensee Public Response provides the licensee with an opportunity to inform both the Agency and the public about the implementing of actions set out in the Agency site visit report. The response must be submitted **within 21 calendar days** of the issue date of this site visit report.

(iii) Publication of Reports

This site visit report will be published on the EPA's website, www.epa.ie, 30 calendar days after the site visit report issue date.

Any licensee response to this site visit report will be published on the EPA's website simultaneously (i.e. 30 calendar days after the site visit report issue date).

Please note that licensees are required to comply with the conditions of the licence at all times, and where non-compliance occurs, compliance must be restored within the shortest possible time. These actions will be verified during subsequent Agency visits. Please quote the above Inspection Reference Number in any correspondence in relation this Report.