

Investigation information release

Date: November 2022

Worker seriously injured during lifting activity

Incident date: 13 November 2022

Event: Worker seriously injured while using a workshop overhead crane to remove a lifting plate

Location: Tarrawonga Coal Mine

Overview

A worker suffered a compound leg fracture when he was hit by a lifting plate attached to an overhead crane.

The mine

The Tarrawonga Coal Mine is an open cut coal mine about 42 kilometres north-west of Gunnedah, NSW. Whitehaven Coal Mining Limited is the mine operator of the Tarrawonga Coal Mine.

The incident

A contract worker was removing a lifting plate after the conclusion of repairs to a haul truck.

The lifting plate and the overhead crane had been used to support the weight of the axle box nose cone to allow welding repairs to be carried out on the topside of the axle box.

The lifting plate, attached to the overhead crane by a shackle and chain assembly, was being used in a vertical lift to remove it from the axle box. The plate was required to be manually manipulated out of the air vent opening of an axle box blower.

Initial information suggests that as the plate was lifted using the crane through the opening, it became wedged in the opening. The crane continued to apply load onto the plate to remove it from the hole. While under load, the plate became free and hit the worker on the leg, resulting in a serious injury.

The investigation

The Regulator has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident. The investigation will explore, among other things, working around plant, instruction, training and supervision of the worker involved, as well as the adequacy of risk assessment, work instructions and procedures relevant to the incident. The mine operator and the contractor are cooperating with the investigation. A report will be published when the investigation is concluded.

Investigation information release IIR22-06

Figure 1 The work area and air vent opening (circled) of the axle box through which the lifting plate was being manually manipulated



Figure 2 The lifting plate found after the incident on the cabin walkway



Investigation information release IIR22-06

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- NSW Resources Regulator [Code of practice – Mechanical engineering control plan](#)
- SafeWork NSW - [Code of practice - Managing the risks of plant in the workplace](#)
- Safety Bulletin [SB22-05 Crane incidents on the rise](#)
- Safety Alert [SA22-04 Dangers of lifting and pulling activities revealed](#)

About this information release

The Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident in the mining industry. Further information may be published as it becomes available.

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Document control	
CM9 reference	RDOC22/243642
Mine safety reference	IIR22-06
Date published	29 November 2022
Authorised by	Chief Investigator, Major Safety Investigations