

SAFETY ALERT

Stockpile Collapses on Loader Driver

INCIDENT

A 17 year old trainee front end loader driver suffered deep lacerations to the left forearm when the face of a stockpile he was loading, collapsed and crashed through the front windscreen. Material from the stockpile, consisting of shale and gravel, partly filled the loader cabin.



CIRCUMSTANCES

Material from the stockpile, approximately 6m in height, was being loaded to fill a nearby screen. The trainee front end loader driver, who was working alone at the time, was loading from the edges of the stockpile at first and then decided to remove material from the vertical face of the stockpile. The stockpile collapsed and material crashed through the front window injuring the trainee. The trainee then ran to a nearby property approximately 400m away to seek attention and call an ambulance.

INVESTIGATION

After investigation, there were several contributing factors that came to light. These included:

- The trainee had been operating loaders for less than a week. The log book contained two entries that involved operating the loader.

- There was no supervision at the time of the incident. The production manager was off site at the time of the incident.
- An excavator, that was used to manage the stockpiles to a workable height, was offsite having repairs done at the time of the incident.
- The trainee, although inducted into the mine site, did not understand the hazards associated with stockpiles.
- The workplace inspection checklist did not include hazards associated with stockpiles.
- There was no formal training program in place for trainee plant operators.
- Emergency procedures failed to work as planned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are recommendations to help prevent similar incidents occurring in the future:

- Trainee workers must be supervised at all times until they are deemed competent for the task.
- Stockpile heights need to be managed according to the nature of the stockpile material. Where the stockpile material is likely to “hang-up”, an excavator or dozer should be used to break-up the stockpile face to ensure it is safe to load.
- There is a need to include stockpile hazards on a workplace inspection checklist and undertake the inspection at appropriate intervals.
- Responsibilities for supervisors or production managers need to be clearly defined and include the supervision of trainees.
- Emergency procedures should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are appropriate. Consider conducting an emergency drill to ensure the emergency response will go to plan.

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety Alert, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This Safety Alert should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine’s information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine’s notice board.

Signed



Rob Regan
DIRECTOR
MINE SAFETY OPERATIONS BRANCH
INDUSTRY & INVESTMENT NSW