

SAFETY ALERT



COAL MINE FATALITY FROM FALL OF ROOF

NOTE

This preliminary Safety Alert has been issued to inform the mining industry of a significant event.

EVENT

On 20 December 2000, a man was killed and another was seriously injured when they were hit by a fall of roof in an underground coal mine.

The injured man was airlifted to hospital in a very serious condition.

CIRCUMSTANCES

A radio-controlled continuous miner was being used to cut coal in a pillar extraction panel. It stopped beneath unsupported roof.

Temporary roof support was being erected to provide access to the continuous miner when a fall of roof occurred. Apparently the two men were erecting the first of a series of timber props when stone fell from the roof onto both of them.

An initial examination of the machine suggests that a build up of loose coal dislodged a control switch which prevented the machine from responding to its transmitter.

INVESTIGATION

The Investigation Unit of the Department of Mineral Resources is investigating the accident.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mine Managers are urged to reassess risks that may affect the safety of employees involved in pillar extraction at their mines by considering:

1. The safe operating procedures and method of roof support intended to protect employees when accessing or recovering mining equipment stranded beneath unsupported roof.
2. The protection of switches, cables and other components on remote controlled mining equipment to prevent damage or accidental operation by material from floor, roof or sides.

Approved

R Regan
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFETY OPERATIONS