

SAFETY ALERT



ALTERNATE RADIO TRANSMITTER SIGNALS START MACHINE

INCIDENT

A remote controlled machine was being tested in a surface workshop using radio remote control. The hydraulic pump on the machine started by itself.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The hydraulic pump flow rates and the speed of the hydraulic motors on the machine were being checked. The power supply to the machine was available, but the machine pump was not being operated.

INVESTIGATION

A separate radio transmitter was having pre-use checks made before being sent underground for the oncoming shift. This was being done in the lamp cabin at the same time as the tests on the remote-controlled machine.

Service personnel were not operating the transmitter, and it was in a safe location. The radio receiver was not faulty in any way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A risk assessment should be conducted on every radio controlled machine to identify and control possible signals which could start an unplanned movement.
2. All remote controlled machines operated by radio transmitted signals should be isolated from operating accidentally through alternate signals.
3. All radio remote controlled machinery on the surface of a mine should be prevented from operating in the radio-controlled mode if there is any possibility of operation through an alternate radio transmission.
4. Management without hard barriers (such as just controlling the location and the operation of a radio transmitter) is not a suitable way to prevent an incident such as this recurring. Other radio frequencies may need to be identified, located and effectively isolated.

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