



S A F E T Y B U L L E T I N

SEAT BELTS AND RESTRAINING HARNESS IN HEAVY EARTH MOVING EQUIPMENT

THE PROBLEM

The fitment and wearing of seat belts (as a minimum standard) is now required under Regulation 4.16 of the Mines Safety and Inspection Act Regulations (1995).

The Mining Inspectorate has formed the view that the wearing of seat belts across the industry is now a general practice (although not universal). This view is derived from both direct observation and from an examination of accidents and incidents in which persons in vehicles have been found on investigation to have worn belts or restraint harnesses and have generally escaped serious injury.

However, there is an increasing experience of injury due to:

- seat belts or harnesses being inadequately attached or maintained, resulting in defective performance.
- failure of the attachment of the seat to the vehicle or of a movement restraint component of the seat attachment, resulting in injury to the person. The failures have been variously attributed to poor design, inadequate maintenance, deterioration due to wear and tear and corrosion, and failure to ensure the integrity of restraint components following damage or detachment in service.

Injury has also resulted from inadequacy of the restraint itself; for example lap seat belts instead of a more comprehensive harness.

ACTION REQUIRED

1. Review the integrity of design and quality of manufacture and fitment of the system as supplied, to determine if it is adequate and fit for the application; (for example sufficiently robust and durable in service, whether a lap and sash or full harness is appropriate).
2. Maintain vigilance on the condition of the components in service, and in particular on the maintenance of the seat and restraint.
3. Ensure that the integrity of these components is not affected by other maintenance work on the equipment.
4. Ensure that all persons are instructed in the use, adjustment and maintenance of restraints and that operators wear them.

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