



**DEPARTMENT OF MINES
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO. 28

MUD RUSH - FATAL ACCIDENT

INCIDENT

A supervisor, overseeing a front end loader driver loading from an ore pass, died when he was overwhelmed by a sudden rush of rocks, fine dirt, mud and water which discharged from the ore pass. The orepass had not been worked for some weeks.

RELEVANT FACTS

- It was known that there was an accumulation of water above the rock in the orepass. Water had been observed draining out through the rock at the bottom of the orepass.
- It was found that the water derived from long hole drilling and from a burst pipe which had been repaired.
- The deceased and the loader driver were aware that there was water in the pass. They did not check the level of water before commencing to load from the orepass.
- The supervisor was last seen by the loader driver sitting directly opposite the orepass just before the mud rush. The mudrush occurred while the loader driver was away from the orepass tipping a load in a stockpile area.

PREVENTATIVE ACTION

- Accumulation of water in any vertical opening or pass system is a recognised hazard.
- Where a significant amount of water is found to have run into an ore or waste pass it should be reported immediately to the shift boss and the manager as required by Section 49 of the Mines Regulation Act.
- Where an ore or waste pass is known to contain an accumulation of water it should be pumped out or allowed to drain before attempting to extract dirt from it.
- If an ore or waste pass is known to make ground water it should be prevented from accumulating by emptying ore or waste as it is tipped, with due precautions.
- A safe system for handling wet material from an ore or waste pass must be devised, promulgated and enforced which eliminates the dangers associated with mud-rushes.
- Clear accurate and timely communication on these issues is essential.

J M Torlach
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SAFETY AWARENESS SAVES LIVES