



Mines Safety Significant Incident Report No. 179

Serious crush injuries caused by falling mesh sheets

Summary of incident

Three workers were seriously injured at an underground mine when an upright stack of more than 70 sheets of construction re-enforcing mesh fell onto them. The mesh became unstable and fell onto the workers when two sheets were being manually removed. Two of the injured workers were trapped under the mesh and suffered fractured pelvises. The third worker was struck by the falling mesh and pushed out of the way. He suffered a compound fracture of the leg.

The mesh was being used for the construction of a floor. The sheets were 6.0 m long by 2.4 m wide and weighed about 40 kg each.

Probable causes

This incident is under investigation; however, the resulting injuries demonstrate the hazard posed to workers when handling mesh sheets.

Action required

Where mesh sheets are used at a mine, a formal procedure must be developed for their safe transportation, handling and storage – both on the surface and underground. Workers involved with mesh sheets must be trained in this procedure.

The procedure for storing mesh sheets should ensure that any sheets stacked upright are secure at all times.

Further information

Visit the publication section of the Resources Safety website at www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety for the following safety alert about a similar incident some years ago, but with a fatal outcome.

Mines Safety Bulletin No. 50 Crushed by mesh sheets – fatal accident

In January 1998, an underground operator was fatally injured when 15 sheets of ground support mesh weighing about 435 kg fell on him. At the Coronial Inquest into the death, the Coroner issued the following recommendation in his finding:

Following the death (Employer) developed a formal procedure for the transportation, storage and manual handling of steel wire mesh, including that no more than two sheets may be stored together leaning against a wall, and that larger numbers may only be stored flat on the ground. I would recommend that wherever mesh is used in similar situations, similar safe procedures be adopted to ensure that there is no repeat to the tragic consequences that occurred in this case.

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