



Department of Industry and Resources

Safety and Health Division

Significant incident report No. 132

Mine haul truck runs over a light vehicle following a driver change

Incident

A mine haul truck ran over a light vehicle following a hot seat driver change.

The assigned driver of the haul truck, who had returned after a toilet break, requested the driver change while the haul truck was next in line to be loaded at a shovel. After receiving approval to approach the haul truck, the assigned driver parked the light vehicle and switched the engine off about 5 metres away, directly in front of the truck, contrary to pit permit rules and procedures.

This situation was not rectified at the time by the relief truck driver, who changed vehicles, or by pit supervision. The relief driver got into the light vehicle but was not able to start it up. The assigned truck driver, having returned to the haul truck, observed that the shovel was waiting to load the next truck and so sounded the horn and started to drive off, believing that the light vehicle had left the area. The driver felt a resistance to movement and stopped the truck to investigate. It was found that the light vehicle was trapped under the truck.

As a result of the collision the light vehicle had been turned over onto its roof, the cabin was crushed, and the vehicle ended up facing the rear wheels of the haul truck. The alarm was raised and the injured person was finally extricated several hours later. The light vehicle was extensively damaged and the injured relief driver was evacuated for treatment by RFDS, having suffered fractured ribs and severe bruising to the legs.



Recommendations

Many organisations currently place a heavy reliance on procedures to ensure safety within the mining industry. Failure to follow the rules can result in significant accidents and incidents.

Reliance on procedures alone to maintain a safe work place has limitations with respect to operator compliance. Where the possible consequence of a serious injury or fatality is potentially present in the risk evaluation, the Department recommends that the hierarchy of control methodology is invoked so that either the hazard is eliminated, a safer method is substituted, or engineering controls are utilised in preference to procedural controls.

The following recommendations are made to prevent a recurrence of a similar event in order of effectiveness:

- Mine managers implement suitable methods of work to ensure that driver change and light vehicle parking issues are adequately controlled and managed. In accordance with the hierarchy of control, the following methods, some of which are currently in use in the industry, are recommended so far as may be practicable to reduce the level of risk:
 - Installation of lockout devices, camera or collision sensor technology on haul trucks and other large machinery to prevent or reduce the chances of a blindspot collision taking place.
 - Provision of an elevated access platform for driver transfer at designated locations such as the crib or ablution area, removing the need for light vehicle transportation.
 - Provision of designated haul truck and light vehicle parking bays with vehicle separation bunds at suitable locations around the mine.
- Vehicles should never be parked in a blindspot, for example, directly in front or behind large equipment. It is recommended that a vehicle should be parked in a location outside the line of travel and where it can be seen from the driver's seat of any large mobile plant in the area.
- Improvements are needed with respect to procedures and training. Adequate documentation needs to be maintained to ensure that all the safety rules applying to any procedure are included on written questionnaires and practical assessment documents used in the operator competency verification process.
- Behavioural standards need to be raised to ensure that rules and standards are always followed. This may dictate rule revisions, where current rules are impracticable, and, in such cases, work may have to stop until new, viable rules are developed.

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