



## Mines Safety Significant Incident Report No. 164

### Fall from height in an ore pass — fatal accident

#### Summary of incident

In mid-2009, an employee sustained fatal injuries when he fell through a grizzly installed over an ore pass at an Eastern Goldfields underground mine.

The employee had been instructed to cover the grizzly to prevent dust coming from the pass.

Prior to the accident he obtained two sheets of mesh and ventilation ducting from a storage area and transported them to the ore pass.

Two pieces of ventilation ducting were put on top of the grizzly and the first sheet of mesh placed over half of the ducting.

It appears that, while installing this sheet of mesh, the employee fell through one of the grizzly openings to the broken rock about 25 metres below.

#### Probable causes

The employee was working close to the grizzly at the time he fell. He was not wearing any fall arrest protection attached to a suitable anchor point while attempting to cover the pass.

#### Action required

To avoid a recurrence of this type of incident, safe systems of work must be in place where there is a risk to persons of falling from a height.

Regulation 4.5(1) of the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations (1995) states:

*The manager of, and each employer at, a mine must ensure that*

- (a) fall arrest equipment is provided to employees at a workplace if the risk of injury to employees from falling cannot be eliminated from the workplace or the system of work at the workplace; and*
- (b) the equipment referred to in paragraph (a) is*
  - (i) appropriately designed for the task for which it is to be used;*
  - (ii) used in such a way as to reduce, so far as is practicable, the possibility of injury to the user; and*
  - (iii) properly maintained.*

Where employees are required to work at an ore pass or in the general vicinity, the provisions of Regulation 4.5 should be applied to reduce the risk of injury or harm.

Managers and employers must ensure safe work practices are in place for employees working or travelling near ore passes, including:

- the wearing of fall arrest equipment attached to a suitable anchor point where there is a risk of falling;
- procedures to be in place for safely covering ore passes, and people trained in applying them;
- depending on the nature of the work involved, at least two persons to be present;
- provision for safe travelling around ore passes; and

- a prohibition on travelling over any open ore pass.

Consideration should also be given to the installation of a mechanical device that would enable the pass to be covered while the device operator is at a safe distance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Ridge'.

Simon Ridge

STATE MINING ENGINEER

15 July 2010