



UNLOADING SERVICE VEHICLES ON MINESITES

Incident:

A number of serious incidents and one fatality have occurred on minesites over recent years during the unloading of materials and equipment from the flat bed trays of transport vehicles.

In one incident a fatality occurred during the unloading of a fan. The truck driver was struck by the fan when it slipped from the tyres of a forklift while it was being unloaded from the flat bed of a semi trailer.

In another incident a truck driver jumped down off the flat bed tray of his truck and landed on a rock on the ground which caused a leg fracture.

In yet another incident a truck escort driver involved in the unloading operation suffered a fractured left wrist when he fell from a semi trailer. He fell one metre from the flat bed of a truck while attempting to secure lifting chains on heavy plant, prior to lifting it off the semi trailer.

Immediate Causes:

Two primary issues were identified in these incidents.

1. Personnel working in close proximity to materials or equipment being loaded or unloaded, or in the general vicinity of those operations.
2. Personnel working at height without any guards, handrails, mobile step ladders or fall arrest equipment being provided.

Comments/Recommendations:

Under Section 9 of the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994 (MSIA) each employer is responsible for the provision of safe systems of work, in this instance undertaking loading and unloading of materials and equipment. This responsibility also applies to the principal employer at the mine, who has the ultimate responsibility for those operations.

In the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995 (MSIR), Regulation 4.13 states that each responsible person (the principal employer, any other employer and the manager of the mine) must ensure that all employees (including service contractors) who come onto a minesite are not allowed to carry out any work until they have been trained and assessed as being competent. Where an assessment is unlikely to be carried out due to a short stay at the mine, the person should be supervised by a competent person at all times during loading or unloading operations.

In accordance with MSIA Section 44, the registered manager should appoint a competent person to be in charge and ensure that all external suppliers who carry out work on the mine are competent to use load shifting and lifting equipment.

The principal employer should carry out a general risk assessment of loading or unloading operations. The risks associated with the tasks should be identified and adequate controls and procedures should be implemented to prevent or mitigate the identified adverse events. Additional risk assessment may be necessary for uncommon or unusual loads.

The principal employer should ensure that a safe means of accessing and exiting the vehicle to be loaded or unloaded is provided to prevent a person from falling. This may be in the form of a mobile step ladder with handrails, may be by fitting a guardrail to the semi-trailer prior to commencing work or may be by the use of fall arrest equipment where the risk of falling cannot be eliminated by any other means.

The principal employer should also ensure that plant and material is loaded and unloaded using the correct equipment, and is properly secured prior to entering or leaving the mine or moving the transport vehicle.

No operations involving the loading or unloading of materials or equipment should be carried out where any personnel may be trapped or struck by the materials or equipment.