

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO: 112

LOADING SERVICE VEHICLE ONTO TRAILER

THE INCIDENT:

On 7th November 2001 a contractor was fatally injured whilst loading an elevating work platform (EWP) onto a flat bed trailer at a mine site. It appears that, during the process of loading the EWP, the trailer over balanced and as a consequence the EWP rolled off the front of the trailer. In the process the operator was thrown out of the EWP to the ground sustaining fatal head injuries.

The trailer had been reversed up to a loading ramp, but was not attached to a prime mover or trailer dolly and was supported at its forward end only on its "landing legs". While the investigation of this fatality is not yet completed and it is not possible to provide full details on the circumstances and all causal factors, it is likely that the trailer tipped longitudinally about the legs when the weight of the EWP passed over the point of balance on the tray.

THE HAZARD:

A number of hazards potentially exist in relation to the loading or unloading of mobile plant and other plant or materials on or off transport vehicles. These relate to the security and stability of the load and the loading or unloading process itself. Unsecured or unbalanced loads present obvious hazards if they are subject to unplanned movement, but there may be other hazards present due to the nature of the equipment or plant involved and/or the hazardous nature of substances which may form part of a load. A comprehensive hazard identification should be carried out in each case in order to ensure that all potential hazards are known.

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND PREVENTION:

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 on its site.



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In the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995 (MSIR), Regulation 4.13 requires that each responsible person (the principal employer, any other employer and the manager of the mine) must ensure that all employees (and this includes service contractors) who come onto a minesite to carry out any work, are trained and assessed as being competent prior to starting work. Where an assessment is impracticable, due, say, to a short stay at the mine, the person (e.g. a transport truck driver) should, as a minimum, be supervised by a competent person at all times during loading or unloading operations. Regular transport contractors to a mine should be contacted to ensure that their standards of training meet the mine's requirements.

In accordance with MSIA Section 44, the registered manager should appoint a competent person to be in charge of transit/transport operations and ensure that external suppliers who carry out work on the mine provide personnel who are competent to use load shifting and lifting equipment where this is necessary.

Preventive actions may include:

- 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(s) may be necessary for uncommon or unusual loads.
- The principal employer should ensure that a safe means of loading or unloading is provided to prevent unplanned movement of equipment and/or falls of persons.
- This should include assessment of the load and correct positioning on the vehicle to ensure stability. When operator visibility is restricted, a spotter may have to be used to direct the loading and unloading process.
- When operating an EWP from the work-basket, the operator should wear a full body harness and appropriate lanyard, secured so as to prevent falls from the unit.
- The principal employer should also ensure that plant and material are loaded and unloaded using the correct equipment and methods, and are properly secured prior to entering or leaving the mine or moving the transport vehicle within the mine area.
- No operations involving the loading or unloading of materials or equipment should be carried out where any person may be trapped or struck by the materials or equipment.

Attention is also drawn to Safety Bulletin No. 48 'Unloading Service Vehicles on Mine Sites', which was released on 18/5/1999.

M. J Knee
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