

# SAFETY BULLETIN

## Injuries incurred from falling plant

### INCIDENT

The number of workers becoming injured after falling from mobile and fixed plant is increasing.

Plant involved in these incidents include: large earth moving machines, small fixed and transportable conveyors, bobcat-type loaders, site delivery trucks and underground mining machines.

Injuries from the impact of the fall include leg/ankle sprains, strains and fractures, collar bone dislocations, skull fractures, back injuries, arm and rib fractures.

### CIRCUMSTANCES

Circumstances contributing to these incidents include accessing and egressing mobile and fixed plant on steps, ladders and walkways, as well as working on platforms and landings.

There have also been several incidents where injuries occurred when covering loads and unloading road registered trucks.

### INVESTIGATION

Investigations identified a number of contributory factors, including:

- insufficient access walkways, stairways, steps and hand rails
- inadequate maintenance of access walkways, stairways, steps and hand rails
- slippery, wet or worn surfaces caused by environmental conditions
- Inappropriate systems of work for maintenance activities or covering loads
- tasks considered to be low risk left to human behaviour
- a lack of operator supervision
- task-specific work equipment such as stairs, stands or mobile work platforms not considered necessary
- inadequate identification of the hazards associated with working at heights.

### SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

The following clauses of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 set out mandatory requirements for a person conducting a business or undertaking an activity at a workplace:

- clause 78 Management of risk of fall
- clause 79 Specific requirements to minimise risk of fall.

The NSW code of practice, *Managing risks of falls in workplaces*, provides guidance on complying with the WHS regulation in relation to falls.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Designers, manufacturers, suppliers and users of mobile plant should consider:

- the NSW code of practice: *Managing risks of falls in workplaces*
- how to carry out routine activities without risk of fall, such as cleaning, inspections, monitoring, and adjustments, so far as is reasonably practicable
- the relevant standards when installing steps, ladders, walkways, cabin access and egress, work platforms and other landings
- using three-point contact
- providing adequate training, supervision and task observation for site practices.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- AS/NZS 1657 – Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders-design, construction and installation
- AS 3868 – Earth-moving machinery – Design guide for access systems
- ISO 2687 – Earth-moving machinery – Access systems
- ISO 14122 Safety of machinery – Permanent means of access to machinery –
  - Part 1: Choice of fixed means of access between two levels
  - Part 2: Working platforms and walkways
  - Part 3: Stairs, stepladders and guard-rails
  - Part 4: Fixed ladders
- MDG 15 – Mining design guideline – Mobile and transportable plant for use at mines (other than underground coal mines)
- NSW code of practice: *Mechanical engineering control plan*
- <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Hazard-awareness-videos-16435.aspx>

**NOTE:** Ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety Bulletin, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This Safety Bulletin should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board.

Issued by

**Dave McLean**

**Chief Inspector of Mines**

**Appointed pursuant to *Work Health & Safety (Mines) Act 2013***

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