

INVESTIGATION INFORMATION RELEASE

AUGUST 2019

Worker's foot trapped in scraper conveyor

Incident date: 8 June 2019

Event: Serious injury in underground coal mine

Location: Appin North Mine, Appin Colliery, Appin NSW

Overview

A worker suffered serious injuries when his foot became trapped in a scraper conveyor while working underground at Appin North Mine on 8 June 2019. The worker was taken to hospital and required surgery. The NSW Resources Regulator has begun an investigation into the incident.

Figure 1 Scraper conveyor showing the lack of guarding and the position where the worker's foot was trapped



Reinforcement mesh overlaid by tech mesh on top of a fixed guard.

Foot entered conveyor and was trapped.

The mine

Endeavour Coal Pty Ltd is the mine operator of the Appin North mining area within the Appin Colliery, on Appin Road, Appin about 27 kilometres from Wollongong NSW. The mine is an underground coal mine that produces coking coal.

The incident

A labour-hire worker was undertaking tasks near a newly installed scraper conveyor. The worker was walking on the scraper conveyor while it was operating, when his foot fell through a section covered only by 150 x 150 millimetres reinforcement mesh overlaid by tech mesh (fine steel screen mesh) (see figure 1). This section of conveyor did not have appropriate fixed guarding.

The worker's foot contacted a flight bar and became trapped in the conveyor. The worker had to forcefully pull his foot out of the conveyor. The worker suffered serious injuries to his foot that will require ongoing surgery and rehabilitation.

Other workers responded to the scene and initiated the mine's emergency response procedures. The worker was evacuated from the mine and transported to hospital by ambulance.

The investigation

The Regulator responded to the incident. An investigation has been launched to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident. The mine operator and labour-hire company are cooperating with the investigation. A report will be published when the investigation is concluded.

Safety observations

Unsafe plant and equipment can cause serious injury and death. Appropriate guarding and barriers must be in place to prevent access to, and contact with, moving parts of plant.

Guards must be suitable and installed correctly in areas where workers may require access and stand on the guards. If the guards are not intended to be used as access or stood upon, additional measures must be in place to control incorrect use by workers.

Mine and petroleum site operators are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety, and to provide safe plant and equipment in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* and Regulations.

Mine operators must:

- identify risks associated with fixed plant
- implement reasonably practicable control measures to ensure the health and safety of the person conducting inspections or maintenance of the fixed plant
- ensure plant is isolated before commencing maintenance or cleaning
- ensure safe entry and exit points from work areas
- ensure permanent fixed guarding or other barrier is in place to prevent access to and contact with moving parts.

There are several health and safety duties and requirements set out in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013*. These duties are applicable to people conducting businesses or undertakings that manage or control fixed plant, and to suppliers and manufactures of fixed plant.

Mine operators should review their mechanical engineering control plans to ensure all risks associated with activities that are to be conducted in and around fixed plant have been identified and assessed, and that the identified controls for these risks are appropriately implemented and maintained.

Mine operators must review and revise the control measures arising from any incident involving plant to prevent similar incidents. The review of controls should address whether the controls:

- are implemented
- deliver the expected outcome
- are supported by systems to ensure they remain effective, such as worker training.

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Managing the risks of plant in the workplace code of practice](#)

About this information release

The Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident in the mining industry. Further information may be published as it becomes available.

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