

SAFETY ALERT



SAND FACE COLLAPSES ON LOADER

INCIDENT

A front end loader was partly buried when the sand face from which it was loading collapsed.

CIRCUMSTANCES

A front end loader was being used at a dune sand mine to remove sand from a face about 15 metres high by 50 metres wide. The sand collapsed around the loader burying it up to the front wind screen and slightly pushing the wind screen in. The operator was not hurt and was able to escape through the door. It took a few hours to dig the loader out.



INVESTIGATION

Because of problems with the quality of sand across the face workers chased a pocket of better sand and formed a large hole in the face about 10 metres wide and 10 metres deep. This created an arc around the top of the face which caved-in around the loader.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mines Inspection Act, General Rule 2000 requires all mines to be worked in a manner that will avoid danger to people from falls of ground. The general manager must assess the risk of harm to people and minimise the risk.

The Guidelines for Safe Mining make recommendations for the safe working of sand pits:

- All sand faces should be worked back and forth along the total length of the face in as straight a line as possible. Loaders should load straight into the face. A cavity should not be made into a face.
- Knock down the face at the end of the day.
- When the height of the face exceeds the reach of excavating equipment consider benching the face.
- Erect a fence or other barrier at the top of the face to stop people from falling over a dangerous face.

Conduct risk assessments of sand pits to ensure all possible hazards are controlled.

Refer to recommendations of Guidelines for Safe Mining.

For further information contact:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. Chilman".

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