

SAFETY ALERT



QUARRY OPERATOR'S ARM CAUGHT IN UNGUARDED CONVEYOR

INCIDENT

A quarry operator was seriously injured when his arm was pulled into a conveyor.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The operator was cleaning along conveyor walkways while the plant was operating. When he brushed some loose rock from under a transfer trough his arm was pulled in between the belt and a support idler. The trough skirt plates stopped the belt from lifting off the idler and jammed his arm.

The operator could not stop the conveyor because there was no emergency stop (lanyard). The operator was able to wave down a passing truck driver who stopped the conveyor. The idler supports had to be cut with oxyacetylene so his arm could be freed.



Photo shows unguarded conveyor

INVESTIGATION

There was a walkway on either side of the conveyor trough, but only the main walkway side was guarded and had an emergency stop. To get to the other side the operator had to climb down a level and crawl under the conveyor. Management said the unguarded side was not to be used while the plant was working. Two chains were used to stop access. There were no signs to warn people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All mine sites:

- Follow the Mines Inspection Act General Rule 2000. The General Rule 2000 requires all equipment and machinery to be properly guarded and protected to stop people from getting caught or hurt.
- Remind people of the dangers of conveyors.
- Review and revise safe work procedures and train people who work with or near conveyors.
- Use Australian Standard AS 1755 – 2000, Conveyor – Safety Requirements as the minimum standard. The standard says:
 - All accessible nip points and shear points are to be guarded and emergency stops provided.
 - Guards to be either fixed enclosure guards or fixed distant guards.
 - Signs are to be well located.
 - Risk assessments are to be done to develop safe work procedures. These procedures should ensure conveyors are stopped and the energy isolated before any work is done on or around the conveyor. This includes housekeeping and cleaning.

For further information contact:

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Gordon Jervis, Senior Inspector of Mechanical Engineering 0418 195 655

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Regan'.

R Regan
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFETY OPERATIONS