

SAFETY BULLETIN

DATE: JUNE 2022

Collisions on overburden dumps

This safety bulletin provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Issue

The NSW Resources Regulator has identified a significant increase in incidents involving rear dump trucks and dozers on waste dumps over the past 6 months. The majority of these incidents resulted in the tray of the rear dump truck striking close to the dozer operators' cabin, placing the dozer operator at serious risk.

Figure 1 – Haul truck reverses into dozer



Figure 2 – Haul truck reverses into dozer



Incidents

Eight rear dump truck and dozer collisions have occurred from November 2021 through to April 2022. All but one instance was in the surface coal mining industry.

Common themes or causal factors have included:

- *Lack of positive communication* - a major contributing factor in nearly all incidents was a lack of clear and positive communication between the haul truck and dozer operators.
- *Lack of situational awareness* - operators were not continuously aware of changing situations on dumps. This includes being unaware of the entry of trucks into the dumps area and truck operators being unaware of a changing tip location and location of the dozer.
- *Time pressures and competency of workers* - with an increase of new workers entering the industry, operators with limited experience in changing and challenging conditions have reported feeling pressured and not always competent to complete certain tasks, with a fear of speaking up to their supervisors.

Figure 3 – Dozer reverses into haul truck



Figure 4 – Equipment damage post contact



Investigation

The NSW Resources Regulator investigated all the noted incidents and determined the common themes above. While other factors were noted, such as obstructed or limited fields of vision (due to environmental matters including lighting plant location), all the incidents could have been avoided if operators of both the truck and the dozer maintained awareness of the changing circumstances of their work environment, made clear and direct communications with each other prior to taking the next step and/or simply stopped the task when they felt unsafe.

Recommendations

While the use of positive communication is a common control across the industry, the increase in incidents detailed in this bulletin indicates an erosion of this control has taken place.

- Positive communication practices need constant vigilance and ongoing monitoring. Senior leadership and direct supervisors must put in place measures to ensure the effectiveness of positive communication is monitored and enforced when required. Workers should always

comply with positive communication controls and report when standards are not being achieved.

- All workers from senior site leadership to operators are reminded of the importance of maintaining situational awareness when operating mobile plant. Relevant training and awareness should be provided to workers who are expected to operate mobile equipment in close proximity.

All tasks should be allocated sufficient time to be completed in a safe manner and operators assigned to tasks should have relevant training and experience. All workers should be encouraged to report hazards to their supervisor. Senior leadership should establish a site culture where reporting of hazards occurs free of perceived fear or intimidation. Hazard reporting processes should be in place to ensure any reported hazards are assessed and addressed as required, and feedback is provided to relevant workers.

Figure 5 – Haul truck reverses into dozer



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Other relevant resources

- [SB19-10 Dozer incidents increase despite warnings](#)

- [SB19-02 Rise in vehicle collisions raises concerns](#)
- [SB13-02 Unplanned movements of vehicles - too many near misses](#)

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