

DATE: DECEMBER 2018

Walkway collapse puts workers at risk

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

Issue

A worker fell from height and was injured after a platform walkway collapsed. The incident occurred on 3 October 2018.

Circumstances

A contract leading hand supervisor (heavy plant fitter) fell about four metres to the ground when a platform walkway pivoted at a junction after supporting bolts were undone during maintenance at a quarry. There was an alteration to the maintenance task from the originally planned task.

The worker was on the end of the walkway and was ejected from the walkway when it collapsed. The worker suffered a dislocated right shoulder and fractures to his right shoulder. After hospitalisation, he had a brace fitted to his shoulder. Another worker at ground level was at high risk of injury from the collapsing walkway.

Photographs 1 and 2: (Left to right) View of the collapsed walkway adjacent to the service truck. The injured worker (depicted in red) and the worker adjacent to walkway (depicted in yellow). (Right) View of the pivoted walkway. (Photographs by the Resources Regulator)



Investigation

The NSW Resources Regulator conducted an investigation and identified the following factors associated with the incident:

- contractor management systems were not effectively monitored and evaluated for compliance by the mine operator during the maintenance task
- risk management did not identify additional hazards during the change management process from the original planned task. There was inadequate information provided to the contractor by the mine operator concerning the plant being maintained
- Environmental factors may have contributed: wet weather was imminent, and bolts were undone supporting the platform walkway in preparation for a crane arriving at the site to lift the platform walkway.

Recommendations

Mine operators should review:

1. Contractor management systems to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of compliance for tasks undertaken by contractors.
2. The competency requirements of supervisors to ensure effective risk management of maintenance tasks and contractors undertaking the tasks.
3. Risk management processes to ensure effective identification of hazards and implementation of appropriate controls during change management for planned task assessments. Ensure that appropriate information is provided to contractors undertaking maintenance tasks on equipment.

Relevant publications

- [SA 18-12 date 12 November 2018 Worker falls from gantry](#)
- [SB 18-07 date April 2018 Safe systems of work for mobile plant](#)
- [SA17-02 date 21 March 2017 Fall from height risk](#)
- [SB16-06 date 22 December 2016 Injuries incurred from falling from plant](#)

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this safety alert and are informed of its content and recommendations. This safety alert 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.

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| Mine safety reference | SA18-15 |
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