

SAFETY BULLETIN

Unplanned movements of vehicles - too many near misses

Background

There have been several incidents over the past six months involving unplanned movements of parked vehicles.

Typically these incidents relate to rubber tyred vehicles being parked on a slope during a planned task. For example, the operator of a light vehicle underground stopped to pick up an item leaving the vehicle running and the hand brake off as the road surface appeared flat. When he returned to the vehicle he found it several metres away up against the wall of a drive.

In most cases the mine's safe parking procedure was not followed and in some cases there was no safe parking procedure. The incidents have resulted from a failure to properly plan a task and follow approved parking procedures.

These incidents seem to be following a similar pattern to those analysed in 2004 by the University of NSW ¹ where an analysis of unplanned movement events in NSW identified for vehicles:

- the main cause of unplanned movement was behavioural events - mostly a rule-based error, or less frequently a skill-based error
- typically these errors were due to unsafe work practices (especially poor standard operating procedures) and at times in combination with other environmental factors such as poor lighting, sloping ground or space problems
- environmental events alone occurred in a lesser percentage of incidents (object in path, slope, uneven load)
- training problems were also a factor
- equipment-related events were relatively uncommon, however when they occurred they related to an equipment breakage just before the incident.

¹ Analysis of the causes of incidents involving unplanned movements in mining in NSW
Ann Williamson and Therese Ma, March 2004

Hazards associated with parking on slopes

The main hazard associated with parking on slopes is gravity. Road surface, weather, and surrounding hazards such as other work activity, or vehicles/machinery moving about in the vicinity should also be considered.

Potential for human error should also be taken into account when determining control methods for parking procedures.

Pre-start checks can help identify braking issues if they exist, however a simple service brake and hand brake test prior to parking would add a further layer of control.

Recommendations

Mining operations should review safe work procedures and engineering standards for parking of vehicles on slopes with consideration to:

- the identification and control of all hazards which may give rise to unplanned movement of vehicles
- adequacy of existing site parking procedures
- development of a site safe parking procedure in consultation with the workforce, if they don't exist
- the potential for human error
- implementing engineering means to eliminate human error, such as systems to apply park brake functions or warning systems which alarm when the operator alights without park brake application
- training of workers in site procedures for parking vehicles
- training of workers in assessing hazards when parking vehicles, with consideration to local conditions at the time
- periodic auditing and review of safe parking procedures.

For further information refer to [Safety Alert SA11-02 Field technician trapped between vehicle bull bar and stock gate.](#)

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

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Regan', written in a cursive style.

**Rob Regan
Director
Mine Safety Operations
NSW Trade & Investment**

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