

# Investigation information release

Date: August 2024

## Serious injury arising from vehicle/pedestrian interaction in an underground metalliferous mine

**Incident date:** 10 July 2024

**Event:** Serious injury arising from vehicle/pedestrian interaction in an underground metalliferous mine

**Location:** Ridgeway Gold Mine, Orange District, NSW

### Overview

A service crew worker was seriously injured while walking in a decline when the bucket of a moving loader hit him.

### The mine

Ridgeway Gold Mine is a gold and copper mine operated by Cadia Holdings Pty Ltd, which is held by Newmont Corporation. The mine has been under care and maintenance for the past 8 years and at the time of writing, work was being undertaken to return the mine to operation.

### The incident

Two service crew workers arrived in a light vehicle at 4750 West Collection Access, off the North Decline at Ridgeway Gold Mine shortly before 7.31am on 10 July 2024. The service crew's task was to assess the water level in a sump near the end of the decline and lift a pump to allow a loader access to bog mud out of the sump area.

The driver parked in the 4750 West Collection Access road as the other worker proceeded on foot down a slope in the decline towards a sump with the intention of lowering a barricade chain to allow the loader to access the sump. Neither the driver nor the worker used positive communications to inform the loader operator that a pedestrian was in the decline.

Meanwhile, the loader operator drove the loader down the decline towards the sump with the intention of parking the machine nearby before commencing bogging. The loader proceeded around a bend in the decline and down the slope where it hit the pedestrian from behind with the bottom lip of the loader's bucket coming into contact with his lower leg. The loader operator stopped when he noticed a cap lamp beam and exited the operator's cabin to investigate its source, then discovering the injured worker lying on the ground.

## Investigation information release IIR24-06

An emergency response was activated and the worker was transported to hospital. The worker received treatment for multiple bone fractures to his right lower leg.

Figure 1: The loader involved in the incident with the likely point of impact circled in red



Figure 2: View of the point of collision facing up the decline with a red arrow indicating the loader's path of travel



## Investigation information release IIR24-06

Figure 3: View from the operator's cabin of a worker (circled in red) standing 10 metres in front of the loader bucket during incident recreation. The worker was not visible to the operator at closer distances



### The investigation

The Resources Regulator has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident that will explore the effectiveness of controls to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety arising from vehicle/pedestrian interactions including:

- planning and coordinating the work
- communication between workers leading up to the incident
- instruction, training, experience and supervision of the workers
- adequacy of risk assessments, work instructions and procedures.

The mine operator and other parties are assisting with the investigation. A report will be published when the investigation is concluded.

### Safety information

'Roads or other vehicle operating areas' is a principal mining hazard that can cause incidents in underground metalliferous mining operations, which carry a risk of serious injury or death to workers.

Mine operators and contractors are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* and associated Regulations.

In particular, mine operators and contractors must:

- implement a safe system of work to prevent vehicle/pedestrian interaction

# Investigation information release IIR24-06

- ensure positive two-way communications are used consistently in relation to vehicle and worker movements
- ensure underground traffic management procedures include controls for vehicle movement in all areas of the mine.

Workers are reminded of their duty to take care for their own health and safety and that of their co-workers. They must also comply, as far as they are reasonably able, with the mine’s work instructions, policy and procedures to ensure worker safety and compliance with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and related legislation.

## Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [Safety alert – Vehicle interaction in an underground mine, July 2024](#)
- [Discussion paper – Vehicle interaction controls in NSW mines, July 2023](#)
- [Fact sheet – Assessment program – Roads and other vehicle operating areas – underground metalliferous mines, September 2022](#)
- [Targeted Intervention Campaign – Vehicle interaction – Surface coal and metalliferous mines, 2022](#)

## About this information release

The Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident in the mining industry. Further information may be published as it becomes available.

Visit our [website](#) to:

- learn more about our work on causal investigations and emergency response
- view our publications on other causal investigations.

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