

Serious injury

Incident date: 21 April 2018

Event: Serious injury at open cut coal mine

Location: Maules Creek Mine, Maules Creek NSW

Overview

A worker suffered serious injuries when the service truck he was driving and a large haul truck collided. The injured worker was transported to hospital for treatment. The NSW Resources Regulator has commenced an investigation into the incident.

Photograph 1: Damaged front end of service truck.



The mine

Maules Creek Coal Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Whitehaven Coal Limited, is the mine operator of the Maules Creek Mine. The mine is located at Therribri Road, Maules Creek in the Gunnadah Basin about 15 km northeast of Boggabri, NSW.

Maules Creek Mine is an open cut coal mine that produces thermal and metallurgical coals. Overburden and coal is mined by truck and excavator. The coal is transported by rail to Newcastle for export.

The incident

At about 7.58 am on 21 April 2018, a Caterpillar 773 service truck and a fully-laden Hitachi EH5000 haul truck collided at a major four-way intersection on the mine haul road.

The service truck suffered substantial damage. The operator, a labour-hire worker, aged 43, received serious injuries in the collision. The injured worker was transported by helicopter to hospital where he underwent medical treatment.

The Hitachi haul truck is one of the largest rigid-frame trucks used in NSW mines with a payload of 296 tonnes and gross vehicle weight of 500 tonnes.

The Caterpillar service truck is used to transport diesel and refuel mobile and fixed plant in-pit. The service truck has a gross vehicle weight of 103 tonnes.

Photograph 2: Four-way haul road intersection showing trucks involved in the collision.



The investigation

Resources Regulator mine safety inspectors and investigators responded and commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident.

The mine operator is cooperating with the investigation.

Preliminary enquiries indicate that the intersection traffic control rules were changed one day prior to the incident.

An investigation report will be prepared for the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment.

Safety observations

Mine and petroleum site operators are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety associated with the movement of mobile plant 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 regulations.

Mine operators must have effective safety management systems in place and identify risks associated with the operation and movement of mobile plant. In managing these risks mine operators must have regard to the design and layout of all roads used by mobile plant. Consideration must be given to the risks of interactions between mobile plant with different operating characteristics when developing control measures.¹ Control measures must consider the conditions of roads and intersections including; the line of sight for the driver, the restricted vision (blind side) of the truck, windrow height and fit for purpose warning signs. Consideration should also be given to fitting collision avoidance systems on mobile plant to alert operators of imminent interactions and the need for evasive action.

Mine operators must ensure that mobile plant is safe to operate and provide adequate information about the plant and road conditions for the safe operation of the plant. All changes to traffic control rules must be adequately risk assessed and effectively communicated to workers.

Mine operators must also ensure that workers are adequately trained and competent in the safe use of mobile plant.

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [MDG-15 Guideline for mobile and transportable plant for use at mines other than underground coal mines](#)
- [Safety bulletin SB18-06 Positive communication failures result in collisions](#)

¹ Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014, clause 28.

About this information release

The Resources Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious injury in the mining industry. Investigations are ongoing and further information may be published as it becomes available.

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning and Environment or the user's independent adviser. All photographs were taken by the Resources Regulator.

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- find your local mine safety office, where you can contact our team of mine safety inspectors.

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