

Miner struck by rock fall at an open stope drawpoint while preparing for secondary firing

Mines safety alert no. 372

Mine Type: Mineral Mine - Underground

What happened?

Two people were injured by a rock fall while placing explosives at the brow in preparation for bombing of the drawpoint. Approximately 50 kg of rocks fell from the backs around five metres from the brow. The ground had been damaged during previous draw point bombing. The mesh was badly damaged and rocks were bagging in it.

One person received abrasions and the other a fractured thumb, however the rock fall had the potential to cause more serious injuries.



Cause:

The ground support had been damaged from previous firings and was no longer effective in securing the ground. The ground had not been adequately scaled of broken material. It is likely those working under the bad ground had normalised the risk of a rock fall.

Contributing factors:

- The drawpoint had been bombed previously that shift.
- Previous blasting in the drawpoint led to the unravelling of the ground conditions and damaged the installed support.
- The site had a system to allow operators to assess ground conditions but it was not undertaken
- The charge crew did not consider it necessary to scale the back or request additional ground support installation.

Recommendations:

- Ensure scaling practices are thorough and remove loose rocks.
- Use mechanical scaling when necessary.
- Ensure the ground support at brows is effective in securing the ground.
- Underground Mine Managers should ensure experienced and competent supervisors inspect a brow before persons work in close proximity to it.
- Underground Mine Managers should ensure experienced and competent supervisors periodically monitor work at draw points.
- A record of when supervisors inspect a draw point should be kept.
- A record of the actions taken to manage any hazards at the brow should be kept.