

NZ Safety Alert

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe

August 2019

Bench failure

A bench above an area containing compressor and generator began fretting. On inspection of the bench some significant cracks had appeared in the bench.

The area at the toe of the bench was immediately bunded and an exclusion zone put in place. Drainage was also installed on the bench to drain water away from the cracks.

Daily monitoring of the cracks has been put in place to identify potential failure.

It is critical that once identifying any cracks, rock falls or potential ground instability, monitoring/measurement of movement is put in place to identify any increase in movement that could indicate imminent failure.



MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 24 months to June 2019 show 20% of all incidents (352 incidents) result from falls, of which 22% (76) are due to fall of ground.

You need to ensure that:

1. Regular workplace inspections are conducted that include a visual check of haul roads, benches, strata, stockpiles and dumps for any sign of instability.
2. Exclusion zones are established around any area of potential ground failure to ensure no-one is exposed to the hazards associated with rock fall.
3. All cracks and potential slope failures are monitored to identify increases in movement which could indicate imminent failure.
4. All workers are trained and assessed as competent to identify potential ground failure and act in accordance with ground control management procedures.

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.