

NZ Safety Alert

11 September 2020

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

Mine fined for rock fall injury

A coal mine was heavily fined this week over a rock fall incident in 2017 that seriously injured a worker.

The worker was operating an excavator in the pit when a 7 tonne rock fall hit his excavator. He suffered a broken neck and fractured skull and continues to experience ongoing health issues as a result of the incident.

The Court found that the company failed to manage the significant hazard in opencast mining operations of engulfment and crushing from ground or strata failure onto plant and workers.

This incident followed fatalities in 2015 from rock falls at two separate quarries.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 33 months to Mar 2020 show 18% of all incidents (486 incidents) result from falls, of which 108 involve a fall of ground.

Check out our booklet on this topic on our [website](#)

Slope stability in opencast mines and quarries

You need to ensure that:

1. Fall hazards such as slope instability, loose material on batters, unstable or high stockpiles are identified in risk assessments.
2. Adequate and effective controls are in place to ensure no one is exposed to the fall hazards identified.
3. Regular inspections are conducted of activities and areas where rock falls or other slope instability may occur.
4. Geotechnical advice is sought where instability is identified in faces and where high faces exist.

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