

# NZ Safety Alert

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

March 2019

## Rock falls from excavator bucket

An excavator operator was moving rocks into a stockpile when a rock fell out of the bucket. The rock slid down the stockpile towards the digger. The operator proceeded to track backwards however the rock still hit the bottom of the left-hand corner of the cabin, bending bars and denting walkway on front of cab.

Falls are a major cause of fatalities in the extractives sector, both in New Zealand and internationally. Of the now eight fatalities in the extractives sector since 2011, five of them were a result of falls. Recent research from Australia, which covered extractives industry fatalities from 16 countries world-wide identified that 34% of fatalities are a result of falls, with objects falling on people being the dominant cause.



### You need to ensure that:

1. Fall hazards such as slope stability, 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. Assess sizes, weight and shapes of rock correctly before attempting to lift with the excavator bucket onto stockpiles and ensure the excavator is at a safe distance.
4. Regular inspections are conducted of activities and areas where rock falls or other slope instability may occur.

**MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 18 months to Dec 2018 shows that 23% of all incidents (322 incidents) result from falls, 20% of which are fall of ground.**

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