

NZ Safety Alert

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

23 April 2021

Snatch block failure during lift



A contractor was engaged to remove an 18m x 1050mm casing from a trench using a winch truck. The rope was rigged to an excavator through a snatch block to the casing, and then through a second snatch block and anchored to the excavator.

As the full weight came on during the lift, the first snatch block in the line broke, sending the body of the block back towards the winch operator and hitting a temporary fence base block. This forced the base block onto the winch operators foot causing a compound fracture of the foot.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 42 months to Dec 2020 show 16% of all incidents (576 incidents) involve falls, of which 5% (176 incidents) involved fall of equipment.

You need to ensure that:

1. Exclusion zones are established for every lift to ensure no-one is in the fall zone or line of fire.
2. All lifting equipment is checked as fit for purpose prior to use in a lift.
3. You always use the correct equipment for every lift e.g., load cells, shackles, snatch blocks, slings, chains etc.

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