

Tailgate falls off trailer

A quarry fitter was towing a trailer on a public road, when the tailgate worked itself free and dropped onto the road bouncing into the path of an oncoming car. The car narrowly missed the trailer, nobody was injured, and there was no damage no damage.

The tailgate had been removed several years earlier and a canopy put on the trailer instead. Recently the canopy was taken off and the tailgate replaced onto the trailer. Different latches were used which enabled the tailgate to work free and fall onto the road.

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. When plant is modified, only fit-for-purpose, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) recommended parts are used. In this case the original latches have now been put back on the trailer.
2. Fall hazards such as slope stability, unsecured tools and equipment, screens etc., trip hazards and areas where workers can fall from height are identified in risk assessments.
3. Adequate and effective controls are in place to ensure no-one is exposed to the fall hazards identified. This may include safety chains on tailgates or other equipment.
4. Plant maintenance checks include all mobile equipment including trailers, bobcats, cranes or other ancillary equipment.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 15 months to Sept 2018 shows that 24% of all incidents (242 incidents) result from falls, half of which are fall of equipment.

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