Significant Incident Report No. 212

Subject: Fall from height at mobile screening plant

Date: 23 January 2015

Summary of incident

To inspect the headchute of a mobile screening plant, a supervisor climbed the steelwork above the elevated platform and handrail to access the headchute inspection hatch. As he opened the headchute inspection door, which weighed more than 10 kg, it came away from its hinge pins and fell onto the elevated platform. The supervisor lost his balance. He fell backwards over the top handrail onto the conveyor, about 3 m below, and then to the ground, a further 3.5 m below that. Fortunately, he was not injured.

Photograph showing the location of the headchute inspection hatch on the mobile screening plant and the supervisor's fall path

Direct causes

- The design of the mobile screening plant does not offer safe access to the headchute inspection hatch – the hatch cannot be reached while standing on the elevated platform.
- The inspection door's design allows it to easily detach from its hinge pins.
- The supervisor was working at height without fall protection.

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Contributory causes

- The elevated platform handrails were not sufficiently high to prevent a fall from an elevated position above the platform.
- Although a site working-at-height procedure was available, the potential to fall from height was not identified and, therefore, controlled for the task of inspecting the headchute.
- No risk assessment, such as a job hazard analysis (JHA) or a job safety analysis (JSA), was conducted for the task.

Actions required

In accordance with Australian Standards AS 1657 and AS 4024, designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers of mobile screening plant should:

- ensure the designs of elevated screening plants and conveyors are reviewed to identify hazards associated with the plant
- conduct a risk assessment of the tasks workers are likely to undertake on the plant to identify where they may be exposed to the identified hazards, including the risk of falling from height
- ensure adequate control measures are in place
- provide information to mine operators regarding the risk assessments, control measures and safe systems of work for the plant.

Mine operators should:

- ensure workers are trained to identify fall-from-height hazards they might encounter
- review elevated screen plants and conveyor systems to identify all reasonably foreseeable hazards, including specific tasks that expose workers to the risk of falling from height
- conduct a risk assessment to identify hazards and reduce worker exposure, so far as is practicable
- review and, where necessary, update site procedures to ensure controls are adequately documented in the safety management system, including the need for specific risk assessments when working at height.

Further information

Australian Standards, www.standards.org.au

- AS 1657 *Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders - Design, construction and installation*
- AS 4024 *Safety of machinery*

Visit www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety for information on occupational safety and health in the resources sector.

- Mines Safety Significant Incident Report No. 211 *Freight truck driver injured in fall from trailer*
- Mines Safety Significant Incident Report No. 202 *Fall from crane deck results in serious injury*

This Significant Incident Report was approved for release by the State Mining Engineer on 23 January 2015