



SAFETY BULLETIN

Working near quarry benches

BACKGROUND

NSW DPI Mine Safety Inspectors have recently observed a number of mine employees and contractors working in and around the edge of quarry benches. The workers appeared to be unaware of the hazards or attempting to control their exposure to potential falls.

In 2003 a drilling contractor working in NSW fell 9.5m from a bench and sustained multiple injuries. NSW DPI issued a Safety Alert *SA 03-03 Driller falls over bench face* (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/safety-alerts) which made a number of recommendations regarding work around benches. In May 2008 an explosives contractor working in Queensland fell 13m over a quarry bench, sustaining multiple injuries. In June 2008 the Queensland Mines Inspectorate issued *Safety Bulletin 79 Activities on Narrow Benches at Mines and Quarries* (www.dme.qld.gov.au/mines/mining_safety_health.cfm)

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that operators of quarries and drill and blasting contractors review the aforementioned safety alerts. Some of the recommendations in the safety alerts include:

- Ensure all employees and contractors who perform tasks on site are trained in and understand and use risk assessments and safe work method statements (SWMS) prior to conducting hazardous or new tasks
- Ensure barriers, fall arrest systems or identifying markers restricting access into 'no go' areas are used or placed along all exposed edges where work is being undertaken
- Non-active benches or exposed edges should have appropriate berms in place to restrict access to the face
- Ensure there are appropriate levels of supervision for all employees and contractors who perform work activities on site
- Review contractor management plans to ensure site-specific risk assessments (falling from height) and SWMS for hazardous tasks are conducted prior to the tasks being undertaken.

Examples of possible effective controls are shown below:



Fall-arrest systems (left) and barriers (right) are possible effective controls.

NOTE: Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety Bulletin, and are informed of its content and recommendations. This Safety Bulletin should be processed in a systematic manner through the mine's information and communication process. It should also be placed on the mine's notice board.

Signed

Rob Regan
DIRECTOR
MINE SAFETY OPERATIONS BRANCH
NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

View more safety alerts at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/safety-alerts. If you would like to receive safety alerts by email, send your contact details to mine.safetyalert@dpi.nsw.gov.au