

Mines Inspectorate

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Safety alert 194

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Well Done! Collision Saved by Centre Rill on Haul Road

Mine Type: All surface mines

Incident: A Cat 785 driver was taking the last load of the shift to the dump and attempted to drink from a water bottle. The driver's left hand was used to steer and the right to balance the water bottle for drinking. In doing this, the truck drifted toward the left side of the road. As the driver corrected the steering, the water bottle overbalanced. The driver was distracted sufficiently to lose control of the truck, which was brought to rest by the centre safety rill of the haul road. At the time, another vehicle was approaching in the opposite direction and there was a high probability that a head-on collision would have occurred.



Equipment: CAT 785 Rear Dump Truck

Hazard: Unplanned movement / loss of control

Cause: Driver not maintaining full attention to driving the truck

Comments:

- This mine is a relatively small operation and is to be commended for employing centre safety rills on this haul road. Centre safety rills are a 'hard' control not widely used in the industry.
- The rill was installed after two previous loss of control incidents. Investigations by the mine found that the 'long, straight and boring' nature of this stretch of road was a significant causal factor.
- There are many unplanned movement/loss of control incidents involving light and heavy vehicles on the Mines Inspectorate database. Causal factors include wet roads, micro sleeps, brake faults, speed, inexperience and various distractions (e.g. phone). Many have resulted in vehicles crossing lanes, fortunately without tragic consequences.
- The use of centre rills on ramps, particularly on descending left hand bends (see photo below), has become more common in recent years, however 'soft' or administrative/procedural controls are the norm for haul roads generally.



- Note the shape of the rill.
- The truck driver was an experienced and diligent operator who made a relatively minor error of judgement that could have been tragic.

Recommendations:

- Use this information to raise the awareness of mine workers to just how easily things can 'go pear shaped'.
- Review the mine's risk assessments relating to the management of traffic on haul roads and ramps, ensuring that all potential controls are considered, including hard barriers. The 'Hierarchy of Controls' and the requirement for the risk to be 'as low as reasonably achievable' must be considered when deciding what controls are to be implemented.

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Please ensure all relevant people in your organisation receive a copy of this Safety alert. Any such advice supplied to site should reach those who require it, and it should also be placed on the mine notice boards.

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