

DATE: JULY 2018

Near miss between light vehicle and haul truck

This safety alert provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Issue

The hazards of complex intersection design in open cut mines were highlighted when a light vehicle operator had to take evasive action to prevent a collision with a haul truck at a site on 28 June 2018.

Circumstances

The light vehicle was stationary and waiting to proceed through an intersection. The driver of an approaching haul truck incorrectly identified the roadway he intended to travel and turned into the roadway where the light vehicle had stopped. When reviewing the wheel marks, the vehicles would have made heavy contact.

The light vehicle driver expected the haul truck to pass. The light vehicle driver radioed 'stop' several times and reversed. The haul truck driver heard the calls for 'stop' and then saw that the light vehicle was in front of him.

Pit operations had been stopping intermittently during the morning as fog was reported to be rolling in and out. Road conditions were also wet and visibility was reported to be between 50 and 100 metres. The incident occurred on the haul truck's third load for the shift.

An east/west haul road intersects three other haul roads, all in a north/south orientation. All three roads were segregated, resulting in six individual roads. Refer to figure 2 below.

Figure 1: Photo of area. Photo courtesy of the mine.



Investigation

The incident investigation determined that:

- the visibility due to the fog had been varying from 50 to 100 metres during the shift
- the haul truck driver drove onto the wrong side of the road
- the travel direction on each road was segregated so there were six separate roadways in the intersection
- complex intersection design resulted in all three travel paths being in the same direction
- some road signs had not been installed in accordance with site standards
- some road signs were poorly maintained
- the point where the light vehicle was visible through the fog was in the blind spot created by the A pillar of the cabin
- the light vehicle was white, however its flag and yellow flashing light were operational
- the mine had a policy in place where workers could stop at any time when concerns existed
- the haul truck driver was a trainee and had minimum experience in challenging weather conditions.

Recommendations

1. Review complex intersections and consider operator error, visibility and flow.
2. Review site standards for signs and audit signs that have been installed.
3. When designing haul roads, consider the tendency for operator error and visibility constraints because of weather and equipment design.
4. Increase monitoring of inexperienced operators during periods of adverse weather.

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 alert 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.

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