



Significant Incident Report No. 253

Subject: Injured worker not discovered and treated for extended period

Date: 27 June 2017

Summary of incident

In January 2017, the driver of a service vehicle was travelling along a haul road to a satellite pit to deliver fuel. The area had experienced overnight rain, and the driver lost control of the loaded vehicle. The light vehicle mounted a verge and rolled onto its roof.



Overturned service vehicle.

The vehicle's radio aerial was damaged in the rollover and the driver, who was unable to walk due to serious injuries, could not raise an emergency call. Use of the haul road had been restricted because of conditions, he was discovered two and a half hours later by a passing worker who raised the alarm. The driver's absence had gone unnoticed by his work colleagues.

There was a delay in the arrival of the emergency responders before the driver was taken to a regional hospital for treatment.

Direct causes

- The vehicle rolled.
- The driver was unable to call for assistance due to the damaged radio aerial and absence of a back-up communication system.

Contributory causes

- There was no procedure or policy to account for workers travelling between satellite pits and the mine.

- The ambulance was unavailable and the back-up ambulance had to be jump started.
- The emergency rescue team were unfamiliar with the site and did not know the way to the incident location.
- The vehicle was fitted with mismatched tyres, not driven to conditions and overturned on a section of road with excessive camber that was not sheeted with gravel.

Actions required

The risk posed by travel is not limited to those who work in remote areas, but also affects those who travel within and between mining operations. The following actions are recommended to reduce the risks to workers who undertake travel.

Safe systems of work

- Establish and review procedures to plan and monitor safe travel during work, including communication and emergency response.

Note: Consider estimated length and time of the return journey, scheduled calls, and responsible person to raise alarm if schedule not met (ideally the supervisor).

- Confirm secondary communications devices or systems are available to workers when travelling in case of loss of primary communication system.
- Instruct and train workers in safe travel procedures and use of safety equipment and communication devices.
- Review vehicle movements to avoid unnecessary travel when weather is likely to adversely affect road conditions.

Note: The service vehicle was sent to refuel equipment in the satellite pit. However, the conditions meant operations had ceased and the fuel was not required.

Emergency response

- Provide alternative arrangements or back-up emergency equipment should primary emergency vehicles be unavailable.
- Familiarise emergency responders with all areas of the operation, the application of alternate arrangements, and use of back-up emergency equipment.

Further information

- Department of Mines and Petroleum, Guidance about travelling for work, www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Guidance-about-travelling-for-6824.aspx
- Department of Mines and Petroleum, Mines safety alerts, www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Mines-safety-alerts-13194.aspx

Mines Safety Significant Incident Report No. 163 *Exploration employee lost in remote bush*

Mines Safety Bulletin No. 118 *Working alone with corrosive substances – potential loss of communications*

This Significant Incident Report was approved for release by the State Mining Engineer on 27 June 2017