

Extractive Industries Inspectorate

Promoting Safety and Health in the Workplace

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

September 2002

Truck Driver Killed in Fall

Incident:

A truck driver died when his run-away truck went over a bank and plummeted onto the quarry floor about 40 metres below. The truck was totally destroyed.

Circumstances:

During the construction of the access road to the stripping site of the quarry, pay hauler trucks were used to transport excavated material to the dumpsite, and to bring the basecourse rock up to the cut for road surfacing. The road gradient was about 1:5.

At the time of the accident, the truck driver was reversing a loaded truck up the road toward the cut, but went too wide and the rear wheel hit the sidewall. He then moved the truck forward to straighten up and try again.

For some reason, the truck was not brought to a complete stop and went down the road in reverse gear. This cut off the hydraulic supply to the retarder brake and main steering system rendering them both inoperable. It could not be established when the reverse gear had been selected.

The foot brake and auxiliary steering system were still operable but, apparently, were not used. The truck was out of control, and moving very fast in a straight line. It went through a windrow and rolled down to the quarry floor below.

Investigation:

The vehicle inspection proved that all brakes were in good condition prior to the accident. It was not established if the auxiliary steering system was activated.

Recommendations:

Employers must provide additional training for the machine operators working on steep terrain, and ensure that they comply with the manufacturer's machine operating guidelines.



All operators must follow the rule:

Bring the machine to a complete stop before shifting from first gear to reverse gear or from reverse to first gear.