



Worker fatally injured during maintenance work to a rock drilling truck

WorkSafe is investigating an incident with preliminary evidence indicating an employee, who was fatally injured, may have been struck in the head by a 48 inch pipe wrench spanner. The spanner was attached to the rotating drill rod at the drill table section of a rock drilling truck.

The worker and a co-worker were performing maintenance work on the drill at a remote workshop. Preliminary evidence indicates the rotating drill's shaft rotated under power causing the spanner to spin in the direction of the worker.

Possible contributing factors in incidents of this type

- Hazards due to the plant being energised during maintenance
- Thorough risk assessment in relation to the proposed work not conducted
- Workers not aware of the potential hazards

Managing hazards and risks

When planning to conduct maintenance on plant of this nature:

- Ensure plant is isolated and de-energised, unless specified by the manufacturer's instructions
- Clearly define the work involved
- Identify the hazards and assess the risks
 - Involve competent persons with training and experience relevant to the issue, supervisors, workers and safety and health representatives
 - Remember existing risks may change, or new hazards and risks may be introduced
- Communicate the work process in relation to risk to affected workers
- Provide any necessary instruction, training and supervision
- Monitor the effectiveness of the controls
- Ensure ongoing monitoring of the work process
- Ensure plant and equipment are clearly labelled to remind the operator of safety controls

The above information is provided based on WorkSafe's preliminary investigation and further investigation is continuing.

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