

NZ Safety Alert

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe

19 March 2021

Rockfall damages excavator

While an excavator was working at the toe of a bench, a rock fell out of the face hitting the excavator. The excavator was damaged, but no injuries were sustained by the operator.

The MinEx field booklet, "Slope stability in opencast mines and quarries," states that:

"A catch bund is an important control to minimise exposure of quarry workers to ground failure hazards and contain rock falls. The dimensions and position of the catch bund will depend on the size of the potential slope failure or rockfall."



You need to ensure that:

1. Regular inspections of faces are conducted to identify unstable ground.
2. An adequate catch bund or trench is created between the face and the pad on which the excavator is operating.
3. Excavator operating platforms are constructed and compacted, and dimensions are at least 1 ½ times the width of the excavator tracks.
4. Excavator operators are trained and regularly assessed as competent to operate diggers safely at the face.

MinEx data on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the 39 months to Sept 2020 show 17% of all incidents (553 incidents) involve falls, of which 4% (122 incidents) involved fall of ground.

Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.