

MINERALS AND EXTRACTIVE OPERATIONS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2005



Dear Mine and Quarry Owner

On behalf of the Minerals and Extractive Operations team, I would like to wish you, your family and staff Merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

This newsletter has been mailed to all mine and quarry owners, industry associations and other stakeholders. Also, in the new year it will be placed on www.dpi.vic.gov.au.

The newsletter should be distributed to your and quarry manager's and your operations.

1. Blitz on Guarding

Processing and treatment plants whether they are fixed or mobile are associated with a significant portion of incidents resulting in serious injuries and fatalities.

Two recent incidents under investigation by the Department resulted in serious injuries when plant operators were caught in unguarded conveyors.

From February 2006 Inspectors for the Minerals and Extractive Operations will be conducting unannounced visits to mines and quarries sites across the State to assess the effectiveness of guarding and other controls that are used to control risks in relation to plant.

Numerous types of guarding systems are available to guard dangerous parts of machinery to prevent access by any person or body parts. If guarding is used as a control measure, the employer is required to ensure that any guard will prevent access to the danger point or area of the plant.

The guarding of plant must be done in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety (Plant) Regulations 1995. Practical guidance on how the company can meet the requirements of the Regulations can be found in the following document:

1. Minerals Industry Safety Handbook;

2. WorkSafe Code of Practice for Plant;
3. Australian Standard 4024 – Safeguarding of Machinery;
4. Australian Standard 1755 – Conveyor Safety Requirements.



2. Audit Schedule for Prescribed Mines

The Department of Primary Industries has developed an audit schedule to assess the effectiveness of Risk Controls implemented to manage the risk of Major Mining Hazards at all prescribed mines. The schedule includes all underground mines, tourist mines, gold mines using cyanide and the brown coal mines in the Latrobe Valley. The schedule is based on a regular cycle. The overall plan is broken down into quarterly plans that identify audit reviews for each three-month period. Prior to the start of each period DPI will contact your site to notify you about the audit and to schedule a time during the given period that is most convenient for the audit to take place.

The scope of the Major Mining Hazard audits is to determine whether the risk management systems, control environment and governance processes, as designed and implemented by mine management, are adequate and functioning in an effective manner.

The assessments are designed to be a collaborative process, with DPI audit staff and site management working side by side to achieve common goals. Once a site has been advised it will be audited, the audit process will involve the following steps :

- *Audit planning*
- *Entrance conference*
- *Fieldwork*
- *Report draft*
- *Exit conference*
- *Follow up*

As part of the auditing program, the Department will advise each mine to be audited of its intention approximately 8 – 12 weeks prior to the audit being commenced.

Initially, a desktop review of each mine's safety management system will be undertaken and a request for information will be made to the mine. Information requested will typically include :-

- a schedule of major mining hazards identified at the mine, accompanied by a safety assessment for each of those hazards (including assessment methodologies);
- details of the measures considered for the control of risk associated with each identified hazard, including reasons for adopting or rejecting all control measures examined;
- records of the implementation and testing of the control measures adopted; and
- a copy of the most recent external audit of the safety management system in place at the mine.

Following a desktop review, a site audit will be arranged. Approximately one-month's notice of the site audit will be given and a mutually acceptable date(s) for the on-site component of the audit will be agreed.

After the on-site work is completed, a draft of the audit report will be prepared. The report contains the scope and objectives of the audit and a summary of any control areas which need to be improved. This report will be provided to the mine director/manager and appropriate staff in the shortest practicable time after completion of the on-site work.

A final meeting will be held with management of the audited site to discuss the audit findings before findings are officially released. Management is allowed the opportunity to concur or not concur with the findings and to present evidence to support any nonconcurrency with the auditors. Any recommendations by the auditors for improvement or corrective action are also discussed at this time.

After a reasonable period of time, the District Office staff will conduct a follow up review of sites audited, to determine if corrective action has been effectively implemented.

3. Workplan Guidelines

Currently the workplan guidelines for quarry sites greater than 5 Ha and or greater than 2 metres in depth (G3 Guidelines) are being reviewed.

An industry workshop was held at Latrobe University in September and comments on the draft guidelines have been received from the CMPA and Extractive Industries Victoria.

The major change to the guidelines is to provide additional guidance for the development of the Environmental Management Program and the Rehabilitation Plan.

A workplan checklist for industry and the inspectorate has also been developed to assist with preparation of workplans.

It is expected to have guidelines available for industry use in the first quarter of 2006.

DPI will also be developing workplan guidelines for the mining sector and will consult with stakeholders early in the new year.

4. Workplan Variations Trigger Guidelines

The draft workplan trigger guideline for quarries and mines released at a recent CMPA workshop has also been referred to the mining sector for comment. Feedback received has identified the need to include a work plan glossary to improve the clarification of key phases and words used in the document. The guideline will be continually refined over the next 2 months as feedback is received. The latest version of the draft guideline will be available from the Minerals and Petroleum internet site from January 2006. The consultation period will end on the 28 February 2006, and comments on the draft guideline will be welcome up to this date.

5. Inaugural Victorian Rescue Competition For Surface Mines And Quarries

The Oscar 1 Mines Rescue team from Bendigo was announced the overall winner of the inaugural Victorian Rescue Competition for Surface Mines and Quarries held at TRU energy's Yallourn mine site on Saturday 12th November 2005.

Mr Chris Fraser, Executive Director, Victoria of the Minerals Council of Australia said "six teams competed in what was a keenly contested event designed to test the first aid, safety, rescue and fire fighting skills of the teams and provide an invaluable opportunity for learning. The teams were from open pit mines and quarries from across the State."

The competition was hosted by the Minerals Council of Australia, Victorian Division.

In addition to taking out the overall trophy, the Oscar 1 team won the first aid and fire fighting sections. The Deanmac team from Loy Yang won the industrial rope rescue section and were judged the winner of the team safety award. The Boral Metro team won the industrial rescue without ropes section. Estate Services from Yallourn won the team skills section.

The highly coveted prize of best team Captain was won by Jim Wilding of the Oscar 1 team.

When announcing the overall competition winner, Mr Leigh Street, Chair of the Victorian branch of the Cement, Concrete and Aggregate Association said "the extractive industry was very pleased to be a part of this inaugural competition and the three quarry teams that competed were most appreciative of the high standard and professionalism of the competition."

Mr Phil Roberts, Director of Minerals and Petroleum Regulation at the Department of Primary Industries paid tribute to all those who contributed to the success of the Competition, in particular the sponsors and supporters, volunteer adjudicators and the "patients" who gave the events the sense of realism.

6. Prosecution

Date of Offence:	23 March 2004
Prosecution:	Galli Quarries Pty Ltd
Date of Prosecution:	10 November 2005, at the Seymour Magistrates Court

Magistrate:	Mr O'Day
Plea:	Guilty

A quarry employee sustained serious hand injuries whilst he was cleaning the nozzle of a spray painting gun. The employee had been given the spray equipment and instructed to paint a new conveyor frame. He was not given any other information, instructions or training. When he had completed painting, he noticed the spray gun nozzle starting to splutter and block up. To clean the nozzle, he put straight thinners into the paint drum and operated the spray gun trigger. The thinners did not clear the nozzle, so he put his finger over the nozzle tip and pulled the spray gun trigger.

He did this because he believed that by creating back pressure in the nozzle it would help clean it out and that this was a normal spray painting practice. He was not aware that the pressure present at the nozzle tip could be between 1500 psi and 3000 psi. As a result of putting his finger on the nozzle and pulling the gun trigger, thinners were injected into his finger under very high pressure. The resulting injuries required two hospital operations and the amputation of the end of his finger.

After the incident, it was found that operating manuals for the spray equipment were located at the company's Thomastown workshop. The manuals contained warnings about the high-pressure injection hazard and cautions about the risk of serious injury by injection.

Breach of Section 21 (2) (e) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985.

The magistrate stated that the offence was one of omission, by failing to provide the manuals, which were later found to be still in the workshop, and failing to provide the necessary training. He also stated that worker safety is of paramount importance and there is an expectation that one will return home in a safe condition. There were substantial penalties, of up to \$100,000, and that general deterrence was relevant in this matter, more so than specific deterrence.

Result:	Fined \$10,000, without conviction. Plus \$1700 costs.
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7. Significant Incident Reports

All the Significant Incident reports are published on the Department's website www.dpi.vic.gov.au/minerals under Petroleum/Health and Safety/Significant Incidents.

The latest Significant Incident Report is attached to this newsletter for distribution and discussion with your employees.

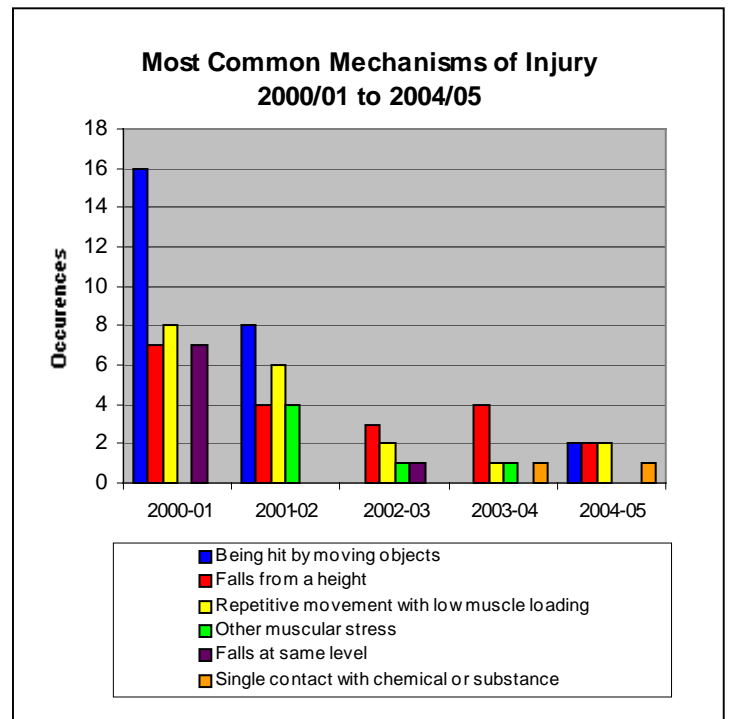
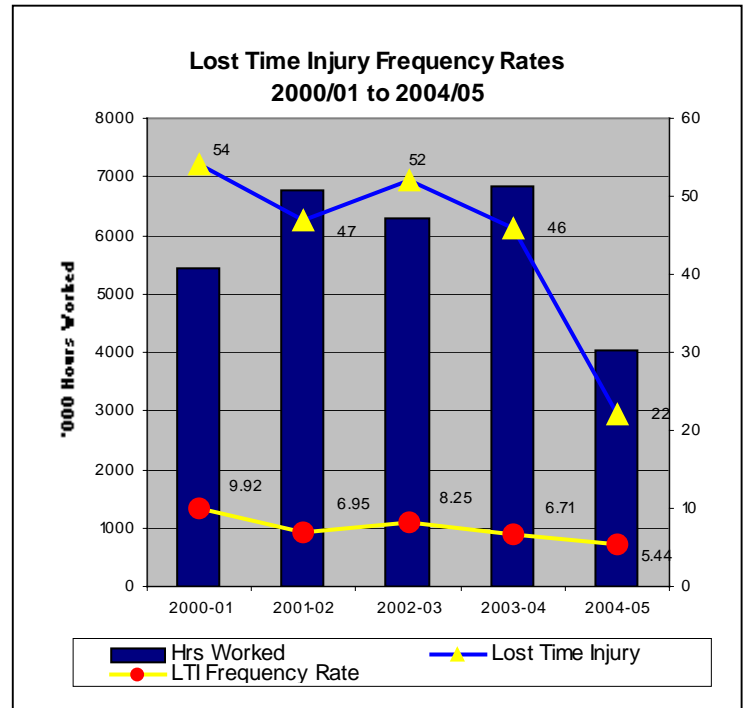
The Department has commenced emailing Significant Incident Reports to Tenement Holders as they become available.

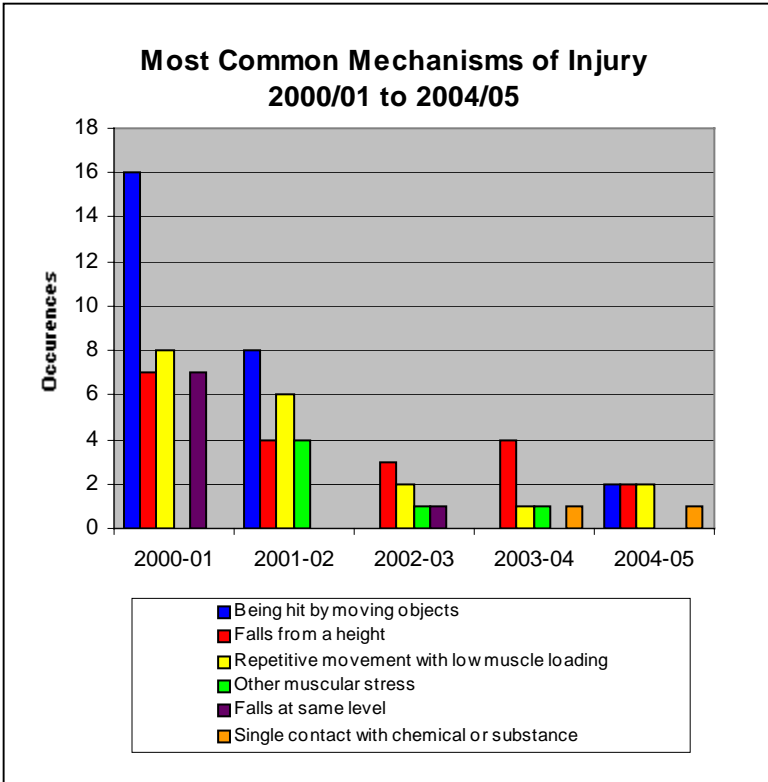
If you would like to be included on this email list, please email jane.fay@dpi.vic.gov.au quoting your Tenement Number/s and the appropriate email address.

8. Analysis of Lost Time Injuries (LTI's) for Mines and Quarries

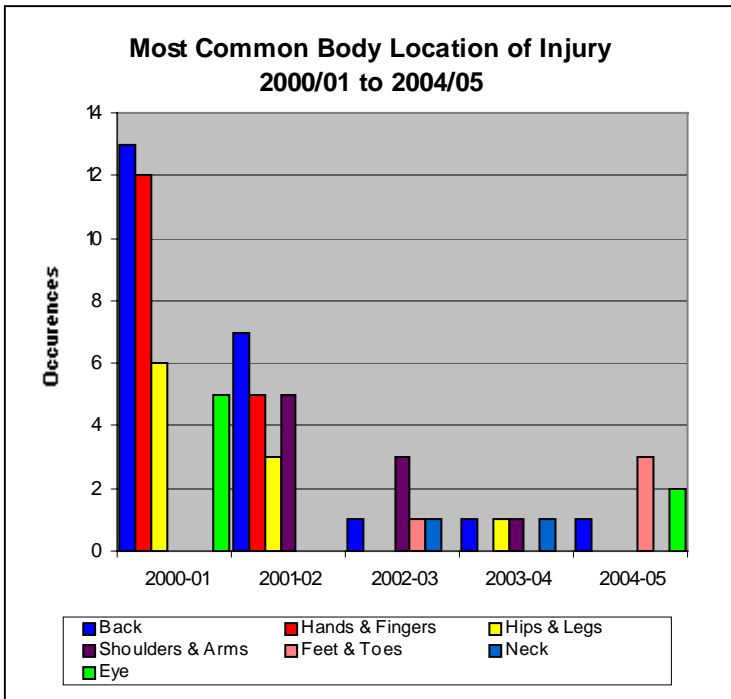
Data for Lost Time Injuries (LTI's) have been collected through the Workplace Injury and Disease Recording form (Standards Australia) form. This form is submitted by both mines and quarries when a Lost Time Injury is sustained at their worksite. The importance of submission of this form should continue to be emphasized. A 5 year analysis has been performed on the LTI data, from 2000-2005. The results are graphed below.

* A detailed analysis will be published on DPI's website, which can be found at www.dpi.vic.gov.au.





The LTI Frequency rate has dropped significantly over the 5 years, to an all time low. The most common mechanism of injury was “hit by moving objects” and “repetitive movement with low muscle loading”. Although “hit by moving objects” injuries have reduced significantly, “repetitive movement with low muscle loading” and “falling from height” injuries remain as one of the highest injury mechanisms over the 5 years. “Sprains and strains of joints and muscles” was consistently the largest nature of injury throughout the 5 year sample. This is not surprising considering “repetitive movement with low muscle loading” was one of the highest cause of injuries. Back, hands, fingers, shoulders and arms are commonly injured body parts. However, hand and finger injuries have improved dramatically over the last 3 years.



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