

Safety Bulletin

Date: December 2025

Supporting video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgQK0j_Ufnw

Bypassing lanyard safety systems on mobile crushing and screening equipment

This safety bulletin provides safety advice for the NSW mining industry.

Issue

Recent site visits by the Resources Regulator have identified repeated instances of mobile crushing and screening equipment being operated with lanyard emergency stop circuits bypassed using travel plugs or travel mode switches.

This practice – whether intentional or unintentional – disables a critical safety control designed to stop plant movement during an emergency, exposing workers to serious risk of injury or death.

There have been repeated mine site inspections of mobile crushing plants identifying this equipment as operating in this unsafe configuration.

Circumstances

In all of the cases, the issue was only identified after requesting a live test of the lanyard system.

Visual inspection alone would have suggested the system was functional.

Pre-start inspections were recorded as completed, with workers indicating that lanyards were operational, despite the systems being bypassed. Notably, the fixed emergency stop push buttons still functioned in travel mode, creating a false sense of compliance.

The various scenarios included:

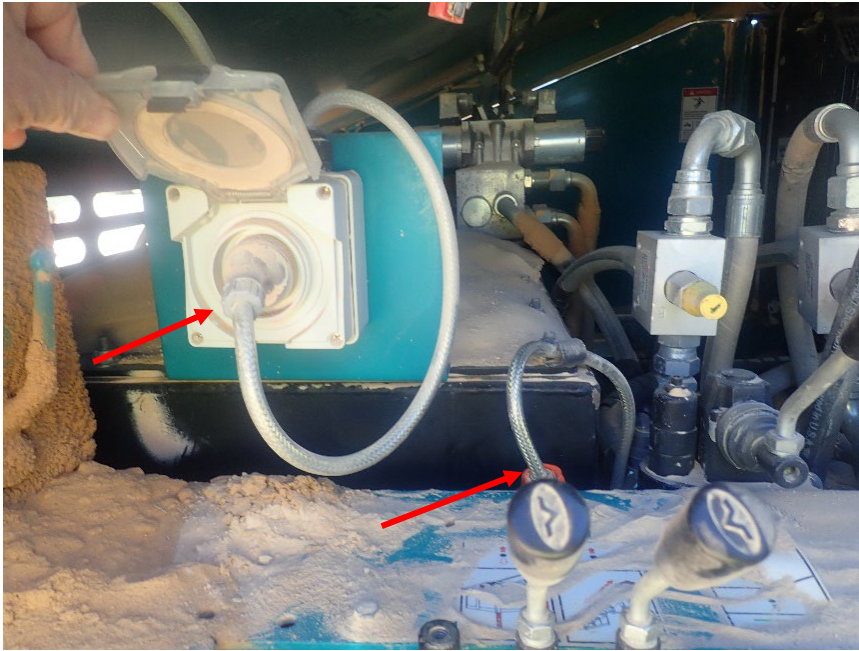
Scenario 1: Contractor – Operating 2 trains of mobile crushing and screening equipment.

- A screen was being operated with the travel plug inserted, bypassing the lanyard circuit.
- No-one on site could identify which plug was the travel plug.
- When the travel plug was replaced with the operational plug, the machine failed to start due to a faulty lanyard circuit.

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- Pre-start checks had reportedly confirmed the system as operational, including the lanyard system.

Figure 1: No identifying labels on plugs



Scenario 2: Owner operator – New mobile crushing screen had been walked to a work location but not operating.

- The screen had been moved and was not operating. The travel plug was inserted to allow start-up.
- Replacing the travel plug with the operational plug caused the machine to not start.
- An investigation found a broken wire in the lanyard circuit caused the shutdown of the screen.
- The machine had been in operation, indicating it had been operated in travel mode.

Figure 2: Travel plug inserted instead of operational plug. No labels identifying plugs.



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Scenario 3: Owner operator – Operating mobile crushing and screening equipment.

- Observed operating with the travel plug inserted.
- Upon swapping to the operational plug, the lanyards functioned correctly.
- Pre-start records stated that the lanyards were working, which is not possible in travel mode.

Figure 3: Travel plug inserted and no label to identify plug operation



Scenario 4: Owner operator – Operating mobile crushing and screening equipment.

- Machine observed operating in travel mode.
- When switched to operational mode, the machine would not start due to a faulty (difficult-to-reset) lanyard.
- Worker admitted to knowingly starting the machine in travel mode to overcome the fault.
- Pre-start records indicated lanyards were operational.

Figure 4: Toggle switch used to control operating mode, was changed over at the time of inspection



Legislative obligations

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025, mine operators and people with management or control of plant at a workplace must manage risks to health and safety associated with plant, including by implementing and maintaining appropriate control measures.

Section 37 imposes a duty holder who implements a control measure to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety must ensure that the control measure is, and is maintained so that it remains, effective, including by ensuring that the control measure is and remains –

- (a) fit for purpose
- (b) suitable for the nature and duration of the work, and
- (c) installed, set up and used correctly.

Section 205 – Preventing unauthorised alterations or interference with plant

The person with management or control of plant at a workplace must, so far as is reasonably practicable, prevent any alterations to or interference with the plant that are not authorised.

This duty extends to ensuring that safety systems such as lanyards, emergency stops, and interlocks are not bypassed or disabled, whether intentionally or inadvertently.

Section 206 – Ensuring proper use of plant and controls

The person with management or control of plant at a workplace must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all health and safety features and warning devices, including guarding, operational controls, emergency stop systems, and alarms, are used correctly and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

This includes ensuring that plant is not operated in travel or bypass mode where such modes disable critical safety functions.

Recommendations

Mine operators and other persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) should:

- inspect all mobile crushing and screening equipment to ensure lanyard circuits are fully functional and not bypassed by travel plugs or switches.
- verify the function of lanyard systems through live testing, not just visual inspection.
- educate workers and contractors on the risks of operating in travel mode and how to correctly identify and use travel plugs.
- review pre-start inspection procedures to include explicit checks for travel mode and lanyard operation.
- review maintenance inspections and service sheets to include checks on lanyards circuits.

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