

# Investigation information release

Date: January 2026

## Worker seriously injured by falling excavator attachment

**Incident date:** 12 December 2025

**Event:** Worker suffers serious injuries after being hit by hydraulic hammer

**Location:** Albury

### Overview

A worker at a quarry in Albury suffered serious injuries after he was struck and trapped by a hydraulic hammer that unexpectedly detached from an excavator.

### The incident

A contract maintenance worker was assisting 3 quarry workers to unblock a jaw crusher around 4:00 pm on 12 December 2025. A 46 tonne excavator with a hydraulic hammer attachment in place was used to exert downward pressure on the material in the jaw crusher to assist in unblocking it.

The excavator was trammed to an area above the jaw crusher, and the contract maintenance worker stood on a catwalk above the blockage to act as a spotter for the excavator operator. As the excavator operator began to position the hydraulic hammer above the blockage, the hydraulic hammer unexpectedly detached from the excavator's quick hitch device. The 3.3 tonne hammer then fell onto the contract maintenance worker, trapping and seriously injuring him.

The worker's right leg was amputated as a result of the incident. He broke his pelvis, scapula, ribs and upper arm, and suffered facial fractures as well as several cuts and abrasions. The worker was trapped for about 2 hours before being rescued by emergency personnel and transported by air ambulance to hospital for treatment.

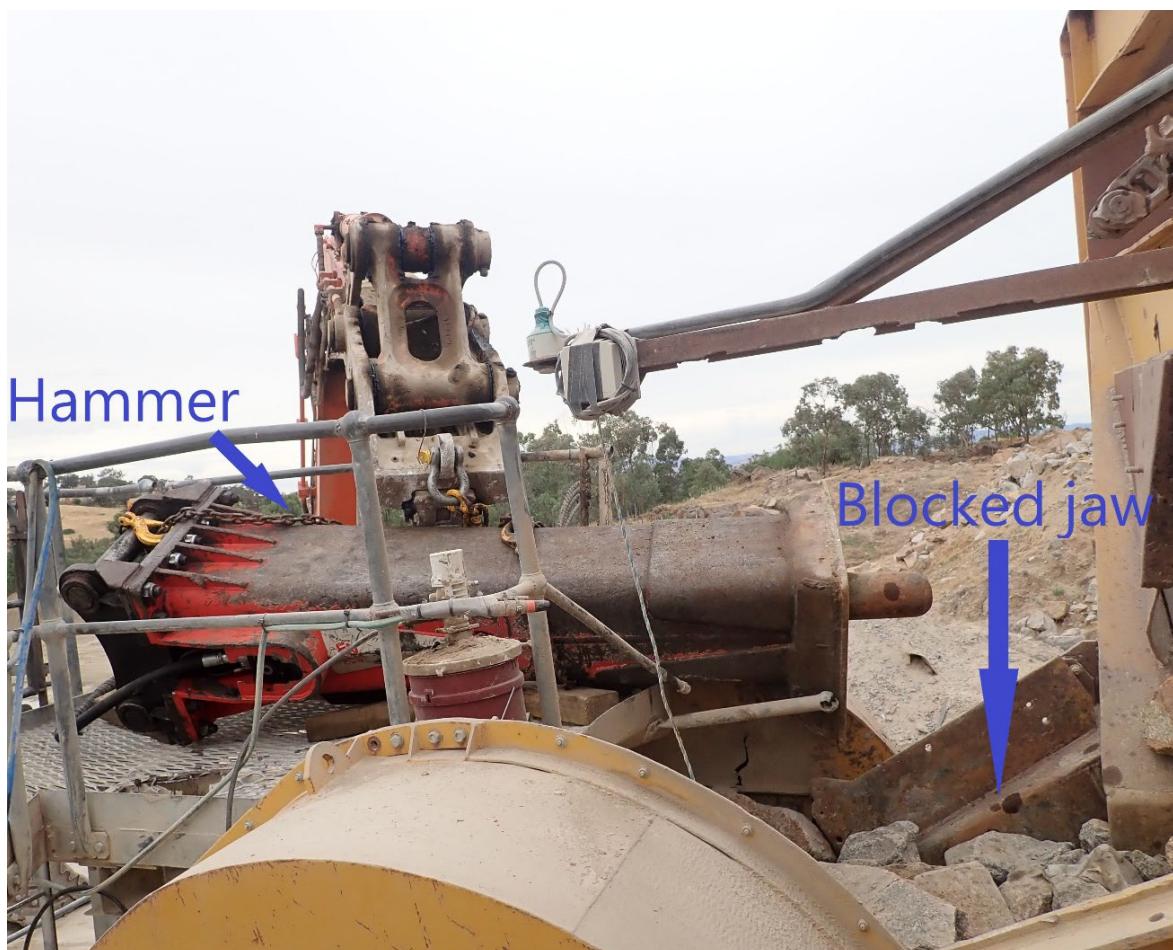
The Resources Regulator was notified and deployed Mine Safety Inspectors and Major Safety Investigations to make enquiries into the incident.

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Figure 1: An overview of the incident scene (Note: following the incident, the orange-coloured excavator was moved into the area and the involved excavator was slewed around 180 degrees)



Figure 2: The position of the hammer on the catwalk after the worker was rescued



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Figure 3: The quick hitch device on the excavator arm



## The investigation

The Regulator commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident that will explore, among other things, the:

- mechanism of failure, including whether the quick hitch device failed and/or the attachment was incorrectly installed
- condition and maintenance of plant involved in the incident
- adequacy of the quarry operators' safety management system regarding managing hazards and risks associated with mobile plant and attachments
- instruction, training and supervision of workers in relation to the work task of unblocking the jaw crusher.

The operator and other parties are assisting with the investigation. A report will be published when the investigation is concluded.

## Safety information

Mine operators are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with provisions of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013* and Regulations.

In particular, mine operators must:

- ensure that mobile plant is adequately maintained including regular servicing and inspections
- implement a system to risk assess the operational use of mobile plant with known faults, and prevent use of mobile plant that is assessed as unsafe for operation

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- ensure that pre-start inspections are conducted each time mobile plant is used
- ensure a locking system such as a safety pin is available and required for use with quick hitch attachments
- identify and manage the risks associated with mobile plant and pedestrian interactions by implementing controls such as exclusion zones
- require the completion of an adequate risk assessment before workers commence a new work task.

## Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- Mining Design Guideline 15 – Mobile and transportable plant for use on mines and petroleum sites
- Safety alert SA20-09 October 2020 – Operating mobile plant – incidents and near misses
- SafeWork NSW Position Paper – Supplying, installing and using quick hitches on excavators or backhoes
- SafeWork Australia Information Sheet – Quick-Hitches for Earthmoving Machinery
- Australian Standard 13031:2023 – Earthmoving machinery - Quick couplers - Safety

## About this information release

The Regulator has issued this information to draw attention to the occurrence of a serious incident in the mining industry. Further information may be published as it becomes available.

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- learn more about our work on causal investigations and emergency response
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