

Investigation information release

Date: August 2026

Contract worker fatally struck by reversing mobile processing unit during blasting activities

Incident date: 3 August 2026

Event: Contract worker fatally struck by reversing mobile processing unit during blasting activities.

Location: Open-cut coal mine near Singleton.

Overview

A contract worker at an open-cut coal mine near Singleton was fatally injured when struck by a reversing mobile processing unit (MPU).

The incident

Mine workers and contractors at an open-cut coal mine were loading blastholes with explosives on a drill pattern in preparation for blasting activities.

The worker, a contract shotfirer, was assisting a mobile processing unit (designated MPU027) with loading emulsion into blastholes. During this task the worker was on foot and located to the right of the MPU at the emulsion hose.

A second mobile processing unit (designated MPU026) was situated in the adjacent row to the right of the worker at about 1:00 pm. MPU026 had reached the high wall at the end of the drill pattern and commenced reversing towards the location of the worker. The reversing activity was supervised by a spotter.

After reversing approximately 50 metres, MPU026 was adjacent to MPU027 when it struck the worker who suffered fatal injuries.

Figure 1 The 2 mobile processing units following the incident



The investigation

The Resources Regulator has commenced an investigation to determine the cause and circumstances of the incident. The investigation will examine the effectiveness of controls to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety arising from mobile plant and pedestrian interactions, including the adequacy of:

- Planning and coordinating mobile plant activity
- Communication protocols leading up to the incident
- Risk assessments, work instructions and procedures for the involved plant, equipment and work task
- The practicability of proximity detection and collision avoidance technology as a control measure
- Instruction, training, experience and supervision of the workers
- The mine operator's contractor management plan
- The mine operator's safety management system including principal hazard management plans and associated control plans and procedures governing the management of hazards and risks associated with blasting activities, and mobile plant and pedestrian interactions.

The mine 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 the 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:

- Provide workers with appropriate instruction and supervision to ensure effective positive communications are maintained by operators and pedestrians
- Ensure that spotters are effectively used to assist reversing mobile plant
- Consider and, where reasonably practicable, incorporate the use of available technology to control mobile plant and pedestrian interactions such as proximity detection and collision avoidance systems
- Consider the potential for mobile plant and pedestrian interactions when designing and sequencing work on drill patterns, including the loading of explosives, and develop effective controls to maintain separation
- Ensure that the risk controls for mobile plant and pedestrian interactions are being adequately monitored and verified by safety management system review and auditing mechanisms

Workers are reminded of their duty to take care for their own health and safety and that of their co-workers. They must also comply with reasonable work instructions, policies and procedures.

Further information

Please refer to the following guidance materials:

- [NSW code of practice: Mechanical engineering control plan](#)
- [Technical reference guide: Roads or other vehicle operating areas – principal hazard management plan for surface mining operations](#)
- [Guide: Preparing a principal hazard management plan](#)
- [Safety Alert 20-09: Operating mobile plant – incidents and near misses](#)
- [Investigation Information Release: Worker struck by light vehicle at quarry](#)
- [Compliance Priority Report – Proximity Awareness & Collision Avoidance Technology – Open Cut Coal Mines](#)

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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