

MNMM Fatal 2004-24

- Fall of Highwall
- December 6, 2004 (Pennsylvania)
- Sand & Gravel Operation
- Company President
- 51 years old
- 25 years experience

Overview

- The victim was operating a front-end loader digging material near the base of a 65 foot highwall when approximately 445 tons of sand and gravel material fell off the highwall and partially buried the loader. He was trapped in the cab by the falling material.



Why Did Accident Occur?

- The accident occurred because the mine operator did not ensure that mining methods used maintained the stability of the highwall. Mining was being conducted at the base of a near vertical, 65 feet highwall that was not benched or sloped to the angle of repose. The mine operator had been cited on several previous occasions for failing to utilize safe mining methods in this same area.

Causal Factor

- Management policies and controls were inadequate and failed to implement mining methods that would maintain highwall stability in the #3 pit where persons worked. The berm and warning sign that were erected to prevent access to the pit, along with obvious hazardous ground conditions, were ignored and the operator continued to remove material from near the base of the unstable highwall.

Best Practices

- Ensure that mining methods used will maintain the stability of highwalls or slopes where persons work or travel.
- Ensure that experienced persons conduct examinations of highwalls or slopes to identify loose ground or unstable conditions prior to beginning work and as ground conditions warrant during the work shift.
- Establish policies that prohibit work or travel in areas where hazards from unstable ground have not been corrected.