

BENCH COLLAPSES UNDER TRUCK



INCIDENT:

A contractor's fully loaded 6 wheel tipper truck that was parked parallel to and within a metre of the water's edge slid sideways into the water when the bench collapsed beneath the truck. The truck driver was operating the loader and was not injured.

CIRCUMSTANCES:

The truck had reversed down to a narrow bench and was positioned ready for loading. Within seconds of the truck being fully laden the truck driver who was stepping down from the loader heard creaking of the bench near the water. The truck slid sideways and then tipped into the water almost fully submerging the vehicle. It appears that this hazard had previously been discussed by the contractor and the company but no satisfactory procedure for risk reduction had been put in place.

CONCLUSION:

The narrow bench width and insufficient loading access restricted the parking position of the truck. Design and development of mining operations should take into consideration the safe positioning of vehicles (mainly cars, trucks, loaders or excavators) on soft or undermined benches particularly where risks are increased by the loading operations. Before any loading or excavating work commences the Company and contractor must agree on an appropriate working procedure at the site.

The potential for a fatality in this situation is clear and although the operator had not been killed or injured the incident highlights the need for a risk management approach. Both employers and employees must contribute to the development and implementation of work procedures as part of site safety management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Sneddon".

N. SNEDDON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SAFETY OPERATIONS