

# SAFETY ALERT



## SERIOUS ACCIDENT RESULTING FROM ROOF FALL

### INCIDENT

An opal miner was seriously injured and required extensive hospital treatment as a result of a roof collapse in his claim.

### CIRCUMSTANCES

An opal miner working his claim had removed a large area of ground and left a large span of roof unsupported. In opal mining, this practice is called "ballrooming". A one metre (three foot) wide hole had been created into this area using a Calweld drilling rig, and this area was also left unsupported.

### INVESTIGATION

The ground looked reasonable to the naked eye, and the unsupported roof span was in the order of 6 to 8 metres.

The roof collapse was centred around the one metre (three foot) Calweld hole that had been completely ballroomed. The miner was struck by falling rock when the unsupported span collapsed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Spans of unsupported roof should be kept to a minimum.
- Propping and ground support should be carried out in areas of large extraction.
- Ballrooming under shafts creates 'loose ends' and introduces weaknesses in the roof strata.
- A systematic process of sounding and assessing the roof is required on a daily basis.

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