Accidents can occur at surge piles when a person, or a piece of equipment, is drawn down into the feeding material. Feeding material acts like “quicksand.”

Another danger is that a person or piece of equipment can fall into a hidden cavity above a feeder when the bridged over material collapses.

The following safety suggestions apply to surge piles where equipment, normally a dozer, operates directly on the stockpiled material, to push the material to the feeder openings.

- Never operate equipment directly over a feeder.
- Never walk on stockpiled material in the area of a feeder.
- Always operate equipment with it facing the feeder.
- Indicate feeder locations with an overhead marker.
Use signal lights to indicate an active feeder.

Use equipment with a fully-enclosed cab.

Equip the cab with self-contained self-rescuers.

Equip the cab with a two-way radio.

Have adequate illumination at night.

Notify the supervisor if a cavity forms or is suspected.

Get training on the potential hazards and safety precautions.

Have a chart in the cab indicating expected drawhole sizes for different pile heights.

Have operators in their equipment and on the pile early in the loading operation so that they can observe how the material is being loaded and the pile early in the loading operation so that they can observe how the material is being loaded.

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Equip the cab with a two-way radio.

Have equipment with a fully-enclosed cab.

Before starting a feeder, check that miners or equipment are not in the area.

Equip the cab with self-contained self-rescuers.

To eliminate a cavity, remove material, starting from well off to the side of the possible cavity.

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