MNM Fatal 2012-09

- Powered Haulage Accident
- June 21, 2012 (New York)
- Crushed Stone Operation
- Customer Truck Driver
- 49 years old
- No mining experience

Overview

The victim was killed while operating a loaded dump truck, descending a decline on a paved roadway between the quarry loading point and scale house, when the truck's brakes failed. The truck left the roadway, partially climbed a tree-covered embankment, and came to rest facing the opposite direction.

The victim jumped from the truck but was run over by the moving vehicle. A passenger in the truck, also jumped out of the truck. He received medical treatment at a hospital and was released.

The accident occurred when the truck's brakes failed and Jones attempted unsuccessfully to shift to a lower gear, causing the truck's speed to increase. Mine operators are required to provide hazard training to customer truck drivers. A sign warning mobile equipment operators of a steep decline was not placed in a position along the roadway to effectively warn them to reduce speed by shifting into a lower gear before descending the decline. If the sign had been placed at the top of the decline, the operator could have shifted into a lower gear. Management failed to establish policies and procedures ensuring the control of traffic on the mine's roadways.

Root Cause

Root Cause: The access road from the quarry to the scale house is a decline starting at approximately 5 degrees increasing to approximately 9 degrees. When the truck's brakes failed while descending the decline, the operator was unable to shift to a lower gear. The sign at the top of the decline is placed approximately 700 feet from the crest of the hill. The sign was not placed in a position along the roadway to effectively warn mobile equipment operators to reduce speed or shift to a lower gear before descending the decline. In addition, the operator's methods for ensuring that all visitors receive site -specific hazard awareness training was not adequate.

Corrective Action: Management placed a sign at the crest of the hill prior to the start of the decline to effectively warn mobile equipment operators to reduce speed or shift to a lower gear before descending the decline. Management also posted a sign in plain view that contained all required site-specific hazard awareness information.

Best Practices

- Ensure that mobile equipment operators are task trained adequately and demonstrate proficiency in all phases of mobile equipment operation before performing work.
- Maintain equipment braking systems in good repair and adjustment.
- Conduct adequate pre-operational checks to ensure the service brakes will stop and hold the mobile equipment prior to operating.
- Know the truck's capabilities, operating ranges, load-limits and safety features.
- Operators of self-propelled mobile equipment shall maintain control of the equipment while it is in motion.
- Operating speeds shall be consistent with conditions of roadways, tracks, grades, clearance, visibility, curves, and traffic.
- Slow down or shift to a lower gear when necessary. Post areas where lower speeds are warranted.
- Always wear a seat belt when operating self-propelled mobile equipment.
- Do not attempt to exit or jump from moving mobile equipment.
- Provide adequate site specific hazard training to all customer truck drivers.