

MNM Fatal 2015-5

- Power Haulage
- March 17, 2015 (Nebraska)
- Common Sand Mining
- Haul Truck Operator
- 44 years old
- 4 days of experience

Overview

On March 17, 2015, Michael Jay Nickels, Haul Truck Driver, age 44, was injured operating an articulated haul truck. Nickels was operating on an elevated haul road that was on the embankment adjacent to the mine's dredge pond when he drove off into the pond. The rescue team extricated Nickels from the truck and administered CPR. Nickels succumbed to his injuries and died on March 19, 2015.

The accident occurred because mine management failed to install a berm along the elevated roadway where a drop-off hazard existed and failed to conduct workplace examinations to identify and correct hazardous conditions. Mine management also failed to ensure that the victim maintained control of the truck he was operating at all times and failed to ensure that the victim was wearing a seat belt.

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Root Causes

The investigators conducted a root cause analysis of this accident and the following root causes were identified and the corresponding corrective actions implemented to prevent a recurrence of the accident:

Root Cause: Management failed to install a berm along an elevated roadway where a drop-off hazard existed for heavy mobile equipment travel.

Corrective Action: Management constructed adequate berms where the roadway hazardous drop-off existed.

Root Causes (cont.)

Root Cause: Management failed to complete a workplace exam to identify and correct hazardous conditions in the working area.

Corrective Action: Management will develop a thorough training procedure on complete workplace examinations under variable workplace conditions.

Root Cause: Management failed to ensure that the equipment operator maintained control of the haul truck at all times.

Corrective Action: Management shall develop a task training process that will monitor newly trained equipment operators when new to the operation.

Root Causes (cont.)

Root Cause: Management failed to ensure that the equipment operator wore his seat belt when operating the haul truck.

Corrective Action: Management retrained employees on the requirement of wearing seat belts while operating equipment. Management will monitor truck drivers to ensure seat belts are worn.

Best Practices

- Task train mobile equipment operators adequately and ensure each operator can demonstrate proficiency in all phases of mobile equipment operation before performing work.
- Provide and maintain adequate berms or guardrails on the banks of roadways where a drop-off exists.
- Conduct adequate pre-operational checks and correct any defects affecting safety in a timely manner prior to operating mobile equipment.
- Always wear a seat belt when operating self-propelled mobile equipment.
- Maintain control of self-propelled mobile equipment while it is in motion.
- Operate mobile equipment at speeds consistent with the conditions of roadways, tracks, grades, clearance, visibility, curves, and traffic.
- Conduct adequate work place examinations using competent persons and promptly correct hazardous conditions that adversely affect safety and health.
- Ensure that all exits from cabs on mobile equipment are maintained and operable.