



**DEPARTMENT OF MINES  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO. 2**

**CONVEYOR BELT – FATAL ACCIDENT**

**INCIDENT**

A plant operator lost his life when he became trapped by the arms, head and shoulders between the underside of a conveyor belt and a return idler roller.

The deceased had apparently attempted to remove rocks which were caught on the top surface of the return section of the belt. He climbed under guard rails to a closed-off section of platform directly under the belt. Access to this area is not required during normal operations but it is protected by standard guard rails.

His body was found in a seated position on the guard rail, with his arms, shoulders and head caught between the underside of the belt and the return idler. A shovel with a bent handle was lying below him on the platform. He had apparently slipped or been jolted forward, and in reaching out to save himself from falling off the guard rail, became caught by the belt and roller.

**CAUSE**

The primary cause of this accident was the attempt by the operator to remove material from the belt while it was still operating.

**COMMENTS AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION**

The deceased had taken up a position in which he was unable to reach the emergency trip lanyard (which runs parallel to the access walkway), but in any case would probably not have been able to operate it, given the manner in which he was trapped.

Under no circumstances should any person attempt to perform any work on a conveyor belt when it is running.

**THE ONLY SAFE WAY TO CARRY OUT SUCH WORK IS TO STOP AND LOCK OUT THE BELT.**

J M Torlach  
STATE MINING ENGINEER

5 September 1989

**SAFETY AWARENESS SAVES LIVES**