



DEPARTMENT OF MINERALS AND ENERGY  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SIGNIFICANT INCIDENT REPORT NO. 48

ELEVATING WORK PLATFORM USERS TIPPED

INCIDENT

A potentially very dangerous situation occurred when the basket levelling linkage on a trailer mounted Elevating Work Platform failed. The two workers in the basket were not wearing safety harnesses and were tipped out. Fortunately, the basket was only a metre above the ground and no injuries resulted.

COMMENT

One cause of the failure was considered to be poor maintenance and servicing by the owners of the machine, a plant hire company. This was compounded by unauthorised repairs in the field.

When the linkage was completely stripped down, it was found to be in a poor state of repair.

A previously welded repair had failed and was re-welded by a boilermaker in the field. This work would not have met the manufacturer's specifications; the boilermaker was merely handed the broken part and instructed to weld it without being told of the duty of the part and the possible consequences should it fail.

On fitting this repaired item to the machine it was not realised that the adjustment of the linkage was critical. Incorrect adjustment of the linkage caused another identical part to fail.

The hire company could not produce records of repairs or servicing of the machine.

In a previous incident involving a different machine on another site, two men were thrown out of the basket when it overturned. In this case, both men were wearing fall-arrest equipment, which was fortunate as the basket was some 30 metres above the ground at the time of the occurrence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. If a hired item of classified machinery is not accompanied with a log book and/or inspection certificate and an operating manual, it should not be used until these items have been provided and examined. Similarly, units owned by the mine operator or by a contractor should have detailed maintenance records and operating manuals and be subject to regular inspection in compliance with the Mines Regulation Act.
2. Should repairs be required, they must be in compliance with the manufacturer's specifications, be made in accordance with good engineering practice and not involve variations to any previously granted design approval without proper authority.
3. Operators must be properly trained to use Elevating Work Platforms (cherry pickers). Training must include the use of the appropriate personal safety equipment.
4. An appropriate safety **Harness** (not just a rope or belt) should be worn at all times and securely anchored by an attachment rope of the correct length to a point fixed to the basket for that purpose.

J M Torlach  
STATE MINING ENGINEER  
22 August 1994

SAFETY AWARENESS SAVES LIVES