



FALL OF MATERIAL - FATAL ACCIDENT

INCIDENT

An underground employee died from crush asphyxia when a stack of 15 sheets of wire mesh fell onto him. The deceased was in the process of moving a sheet of mesh from the stack in order to place it in a location where a tunnel was to be meshed and bolted.

The deceased was working alone at the time. His workmate had gone to see the jumbo operator to discuss the job.

The supplier's specifications indicate that each sheet of mesh had a weight of 29kg.

The combined weight of the 15 sheets would thus be 435kg.

The sheets had dimensions of 3.0m by 2.4m.

The stack of sheets was standing upright with a 2.4m long side on the floor.

CAUSES

The immediate cause was the mesh falling on the person who was working in close proximity to the stack when it became dislodged.

PREVENTATIVE ACTION

A process of developing safe work practices for the manual handling of heavy and bulky materials is outlined in the WorkSafe Australia Standard for Manual Handling, and in the Code of Practice for Manual Handling developed by WorkSafe WA.

The method described involves a risk assessment approach.

The accident could have been prevented by forming a flat layer of mesh sheets on the floor rather than stacking the mesh vertically.

Where smaller numbers of sheets need to be stacked vertically in preparation for installation, they can be temporarily secured in place with the use of hooks, chains, ropes or similar means.

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