

SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENT: January 2013

Contractor Employee Struck By Falling Material

On January 8, 2013, a contractor worker was seriously injured when he was struck in the head by a piece of material build-up that fell from the ceiling of the Pre-Heater Tower where he was working. The injured worker was part of a crew erecting scaffolding inside the Pre-Heater Tower. As he was lowering scaffolding material to co-workers, he was struck in the head by falling material, which rendered him temporarily unconscious, and knocked him off the platform on which he was working. His fall protection harness and lanyard stopped his fall. His co-workers released him from the harness and kept him immobile until rescue workers arrived. EMS personnel transported him to a local hospital where he was treated for a mild concussion and bruising along his neck and upper back. He was released from the hospital in the afternoon of the next day.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The accident occurred as a result of the failure to identify and eliminate workplace hazards prior to workers beginning work.
- Virginia mineral mining laws and regulations require workplace examinations by a certified mine foreman or cement plant examiner prior to workers beginning work. Uncertified personnel examined the work area, but failed to recognize the fall of material hazards that existed.
- Hazard training provided to the contractor employees was inadequate as no reference was made to the potential hazard from material buildup inside the vessel. Specific hazards of the area to be worked in should be a part of any Site Specific Hazard Training.
- Conducting proper workplace examinations should be reviewed with all employees along with hazard recognition.
- The accident, and all factors that led to its occurrence, should be reviewed with all employees.
- DMM Enforcement actions included:
 - A Closure Order was issued to the mine operator because an imminent danger existed to persons working in the vessel of the Pre-Heater Tower above the 6th floor.
 - Notices of Violation were issued to the mine operator, and both contractors involved, for failure to have a certified mine foreman examine the work area at the beginning of the shift.
 - A Notice of Violation was issued to the mine operator for failure to promptly report the accident to the Department.



Platform where miner was injured