

SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENT: April 2013

Stone Saw Operator Struck By Rock Fragment

On April 25, 2013, a dimension stone saw operator with twenty-one weeks of experience was seriously injured when a two-foot long rock fragment broke off of a large finished dimension stone block and struck his right foot. The saw operator and his lead-man were examining the block for imperfections and discussing sawing techniques to improve block quality when the rock fragment popped loose from the corner of the block. The jagged end of the rock fragment landed on top of the saw operator's right boot approximately two inches behind the boot's steel toe and impaled his foot. The injured miner was transported to a local hospital where he underwent surgery to repair a severely fractured metatarsal bone in his right foot. He was released from the hospital the next day.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Miners should not stand in a position where rock fragments or other falling material could hit them.
- Miners should be trained to identify and be aware of potential hazards associated with working around large dimension stone blocks.
- This training should emphasize the hazards associated with stress build-up in the blocks resulting from cutting, sawing, and handling. One of the effects of this stress is the possibility of pieces breaking off without warning and where there was no sign of weakness or cracking.
- Ensure that miners working around the large blocks are equipped with proper personal protection equipment. Steel toe boots with metatarsal guards may be an appropriate requirement for those dealing with these large blocks of stone.
- The specifics of this accident and preventive measures should be reviewed with all personnel.
- A Notice of Violation was issued to mine management for failing to report this accident immediately as required by the Mineral Mine Safety Laws of Virginia.



Original location of the rock fragment that struck the miner
Note the rock fragment located next to the block in the bottom center of the photograph