



Division of Mineral Mining

Fatal Accident: Construction Worker Fall November 20, 2003

A 41-year-old contractor employee with 10 years of experience was fatally injured when he fell approximately 30 feet while constructing a new processing plant at a Virginia salt mine. The victim and a co-worker were installing a steel crossbeam when the victim fell from the steel beam that he was sitting on. The victim was wearing a safety harness with a lanyard, but the lanyard was not properly secured to stop his fall. According to several workers who witnessed the fall, the victim may have been unconscious or experiencing a seizure when he fell. The medical examiner determined the cause of death to be multiple blunt force injuries from the fall.



Victim was sitting on the large structural steel beam shown in center of photograph prior to fall.



Close-up photo showing location where miner was sitting before he fell.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Always wear a safety harness with a securely anchored lanyard when working where there is a danger of falling (4VAC25-40-1740). Appropriate fall protection equipment and the means or devices to properly secure them must be provided and inspected periodically to ensure they are in proper working condition (45.1-161.292:7)(4VAC25-40-330). All employees required to use fall protection/devices must be trained in the selection, inspection, and use of fall protection equipment and devices (4VAC25-40-100).