



# Hazard Alert

## *Excavators in the Mining Industry*



Over the past few years, excavator incidents at mine sites have increased at a concerning rate. The mining industry in the province of British Columbia has experienced two fatalities and several incidents that have resulted in workers being injured and/or equipment damaged.

### Incident Summaries

On February 28, 2008, at or about 1600 hours, a 60-year-old male mine worker died of injuries he sustained in a mine mobile equipment event. The worker was a mine excavator operator. The mechanism of injury was a tipover of the excavator into standing water. All attempts at extrication and resuscitation failed, and the cause of death was asphyxiation caused by drowning.

On June 9, 2007, at or about 0815 hours, a 32-year-old male mine worker died of injuries he sustained in a mine settling pond cleaning event. The worker was an excavator operator. The mechanism of injury was the overbalancing of an excavator engaged in cleaning a settling pond, resulting in the machine's tipping into the pond, and the cause of death was mechanical asphyxiation.

If you have information that would benefit the health and safety of the British Columbia mining industry or have comments or concerns regarding this topic, please contact:

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## Excavators in the Mining Industry (cont'd)

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On September 18, 2007, an excavator operator was working a sloped area with a Cat Excavator. At approximately 1000 hours, a supervisor noticed that the excavator was no longer visible. The excavator had been buried when 17,000 – 35,000 tonnes of material sloughed off the wall. After searching for the excavator, the operator was removed from the cab at approximately 2300 hours. He was able to walk with assistance from the rescue team. The machine was never recovered.

*RIGHT: This excavator was completely buried when material sloughed off the wall. The operator was trapped in the cab for approximately 13 hours.*



### Safe Work Practices

- **When working near water, consider ground stability, removal of bush guards or any other barriers that may impair egress from the cab, and any other dangers that working near water can bring.**
- **Perform site inspections of work areas and identify hazards before starting work, continue evaluations as the conditions change during the work day.**
- **Ensure all workers receive adequate instruction in operation of equipment and safe performance of tasks.**
- **Equipment maintenance log books and any other records must be kept current.**

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