

Utility Trucks on Mine Sites

Utility vehicles are essential tools for completing tasks in heavy-duty industrial environments. A recent dangerous occurrence involving a utility truck highlighted several safety considerations around the use of mobile equipment on mine sites.

In early 2022 on a BC mine site, an incident occurred where a utility truck started rolling downhill after being parked by the driver. The driver, who was outside of the vehicle at the time of the incident, was severely injured while attempting to regain control after it started to roll away. The utility truck, unattended and out of control, travelled across an active haul road before stopping at an embankment. The vehicle was later inspected and was found to have a buildup of mud on the transmission and parking brake cable, and a second parking cable was completely separated. However, the event of the runaway vehicle was not a single occurrence, nor was the issue of the buildup of material rendering the parking brake unusable.



Several considerations have been identified resulting from an analysis of this event.

Considerations

1. **Maintenance:** Vehicle maintenance should be performed regularly to ensure vehicles are safe and functioning normally. The type of use, site conditions, and environmental factors may impact a vehicle's function and safety systems. Consider increasing maintenance intervals for vehicles with increased use and wear.
2. **Pre/Post Inspections:** Operators should perform pre-and post-trip vehicle inspections and be trained to recognize when a component or safety system is not functioning correctly.
3. **Safe Work Procedures:** Staff operating vehicles should be aware of the procedures for securing vehicles. Consider additional methods to ensure the vehicle is secure, not solely relying on the transmission or brakes.
4. **PPE:** Workers should wear high visibility clothing in areas exposed to vehicle traffic, especially in unlit areas or at night. Lights from vehicles should not be relied upon to ensure workers are visible. Additional measures should be taken if the worker is alone.
5. **Vehicle Modifications:** No modification or bypass of a safety feature or normal operating system should be done. If the system is not operating correctly, it should be removed from service until it is repaired.

Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in BC

Mine managers and supervisors are reminded of their responsibility for the well-being and training of their workers. Mobile equipment is required to be maintained; brake and steering systems must be serviced by a certified person (or under supervision) through a regularly scheduled maintenance program. Before using mobile equipment, the operator must examine the equipment and review the logbook to ensure it is safe for operation. PPE should be adapted and appropriate for the working environment. Mine managers are also reminded to recognize when practices to mitigate the potential for runaway vehicles are not adequate.