

Worker trapped in crusher surge bin

Synopsis

On 2022-05-03, at approximately 21:00 hours at an open pit hard rock mine in British Columbia, two contract workers were inside the surge bin of a crusher scaling the materials using shovels and air lances, for maintenance purposes. Workers then exited the surge bin and started the conveyor underneath the surge bin to remove the loosened materials. It was observed that no material was dropping onto the conveyor indicating the materials were stuck (“bridged”) inside the surge bin. One of the contract workers re-entered the surge bin. The bridged materials collapsed trapping the worker up to his thighs.



FIGURE 1. Surge Bin Door with Collapsed Materials.

Findings

An investigation was initiated by the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation pursuant to [Section 1](#) of the *Mines Regulation*. Later, the Chief Inspector of Mines (CIM) ordered an investigation under [Section 7](#) of the *Mines Act* (The Act).

The investigation found deficiencies in training, supervision, procurement, risk assessment and confined space works.

The mine hired a prime contractor for supplying contract workers. The prime contractor then subcontracted contract workers from a third company. This incident is the result of the collective impact of a variety of contract workers assigned a task yet with varying knowledge, training, experience, risk awareness and supervision in place. This contributed to a confined space that was left unguarded and an inadequate work plan.

Outcome

A [Section 18](#) Order was issued to the mine manager for an independent engineering report for safety of the surge bin scaling task. The mine manager also submitted an investigation report. Both reports identify corrective actions to the task and safety management.

No additional enforcement was recommended as the mine demonstrated adequate learnings from the incident and is implementing corrective actions to address the safety concerns.