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## **FOUR WHEEL DRIVE SAFETY**

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### **INCIDENT**

A mine worker sustained minor injuries when he drove a four-wheel drive vehicle into a culvert.

The four-wheel drive vehicle was been driven slowly along a track adjacent to a pipeline, when the driver lost control of the vehicle. This resulted in the vehicle going nose first into a culvert and coming to a very sudden stop.

### **COMMENTS**

Since 1999, the Department has received numerous notifications from quarries, mines and exploration sites relating to the loss of control of four-wheel drive vehicles. Most have been roll-over incidents.

Many of the incidents resulted in major damage to the vehicles involved and had the potential to cause very serious injuries.

Investigations have identified the four most common contributing factors were:

- The load distribution raised the centre of gravity of the vehicle to an unsafe height.
- The vehicle speed was too high in relation to the road or ground surface conditions.
- The vehicle was driven onto ground surfaces which were outside its capability and the design specifications of the vehicle manufacturer.
- Drivers made errors of judgement during the operation of their vehicles.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS & PREVENTATIVE ACTION**

- Companies must ensure that all vehicles are suitable for the road and ground surfaces on which they will be driven
- Companies must ensure that all vehicles are used and loaded in accordance with manufacturers specifications
- Where practicable, properly formed and maintained roads and tracks must be provided, along with effective traffic controls
- The effectiveness of traffic controls and related control measures need to be audited on regular basis
- All new employees required to drive four-wheel drive vehicles must be given information, instruction and training on the specific vehicles they will be required to drive and, where required, on off road safety procedures
- All persons required to drive four-wheel drive vehicles should have regular refresher training
- Drivers, relevant health and safety representatives and supervisors must be involved in the hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control processes and where necessary, Safe Work Procedures should be developed and implemented for specific vehicles and tasks to be conducted with those vehicles.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 & Occupational Health and Safety (Plant) Regulations 1995.
- Minerals Industry Safety Handbook.
- Contact John Mitas, Manager, Minerals and Extractive Operations DPI (Victoria) on +61 3 9658 4422.



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