

Extractive Industries Inspectorate

Promoting Safety and Health in the Workplace

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

April 2002

Fatal Drilling Accident at a Quarry

Incident

A driller sustained fatal injuries at a limestone quarry in Northland. No one witnessed the accident but it is evident that his overalls became entangled while he was attaching a new drill rod to the drill's shank adapter. His body was found tightly bound onto the rotating drill rod.

Circumstances

The machine was a hydraulic Ingersoll Rand XL 635 crawler rig, incorporating an automatic rod changer and an operator's cab from which the drilling operations are controlled.

To install a new rod into the automatic rod changer rack, it needs to be attached to the drill's shank adapter first and he was doing this with the drill shank rotating at about 60 to 70 rpm. The drill carriage was positioned about a metre above the ground surface as shown in the photograph.

The 3.66 metre-long rods weigh 43.5 kg and being heavy, he was probably holding it up against his body at about hip level as he placed the end onto the rotating drillshank.



Recommendation

Drillers should be alerted to the hazard of working near rotating drill steel and, in particular, warned never to attach rods, couplings or bits to a rotating part.

A miner died in a similar accident in Western Australia while attaching a drill bit.