

# Extractive Industries Inspectorate

*Promoting Safety and Health in the Extractive Industries*

## ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ALERT

21 October 2002

### Towing Tractor Tips Over

#### Incident

A mobile plant operator received serious injuries when the tractor he was driving tipped over while towing a water tank down a quarry road. The operator protective structure prevented the tractor rolling on the victim and also prevented further movement of the trailer.

#### Circumstances

A water tank was taken into the gravel pit to add water to a stockpile. This required driving down a good road of a gradient about 1:10 into the bottom of the pit. Once on the road the water tank trailer pushed the tractor down the slope before coming to rest at the bottom of the pit. The tractor had been put in low gear to try to hold the trailer back but this was not sufficient to hold back the weight of the tanker.

#### Investigation

The water tank trailer air brakes had been disconnected, as the tractor had no facility to supply compressed air. The approximate weight of the tractor was 2.6 tonnes and of the water tank trailer was 14.5 tonnes. The trailer was too heavy to be towed by the tractor. The operator was unaware of the potential hazards.



Positioning of tractor and trailer after the accident.

#### Recommendations

- Vehicles used for towing purposes must be suitable for the trailer being towed. (Consult manufacturers and Land Transport Rules.)
- Trailers weighing more than 3.5 tonnes must have a braking facility.
- **Safety frames save lives.**