

HAZARD ALERT

REMOTE CONTROL SCOOPTRAM INCIDENT

Hazard Summary

A scooptram operator with eighteen years experience was operating a remote control eight yard Toro scooptram in a 27 metre long draw point access at the Ruttan Mine on March 10, 2002.

Twenty-two buckets of muck had been successfully removed from the draw point. When the twenty-third bucket was recovered, the operator reversed the machine as was the normal procedure. As the unit approached the operator, who was positioned 7.5 metres behind the unit in the travelway, he placed the throttle handle in the neutral position. The vehicle did not respond. He then hit the emergency brake, but the scooptram continued to advance toward him at full throttle. At this point the operator panicked and did not hit the kill switch; he turned to the drift wall and squeezed himself into position, hoping for the best. The unit brushed his lamp battery as it went by, and came to a stop when it impacted the wall at the turn to the main drift.

Manitoba Regulation 228/94 Section 112.1(2)(a) requires that *“the employer shall, in consultation with the workplace safety and health committee, develop a written procedure for use of the remote controlled equipment to ensure the safety and health of workers and shall submit the written procedure for the approval of the director.”*

The operator was not utilizing the drift wall cut out located 20 metres back from the brow. Company policy states that an operator must maintain 15 metres between himself and the unit at all times.

Company officials, through discussions with the Mines Inspector, determined the underlying causes in consultations with the manufacturer. Necessary modifications were made to the remote control unit and the equipment was released back to the operations.



Cautionary note

All concerned must recognize that the safety features on mechanical equipment may fail. It is important to make sure the operator is provided with and uses a drift wall cut out.