

# SAFE WORK



No. 229  
October 2003

## Drilling Oversize Rock Chunks Underground – HAZARD ALERT

### Hazard Summary

During a routine proactive inspection of an underground operation, a mines inspector noticed that holes had been drilled into several oversize chunks inside a brow of a drawpoint. The holes had been drilled by a jumbo drill. The chunks had not been drilled remotely, and were not checked to see if they contained a mishole. If one of the chunks had contained a mishole, the potential would have been very high for a **serious injury or fatality**.

### Legislation

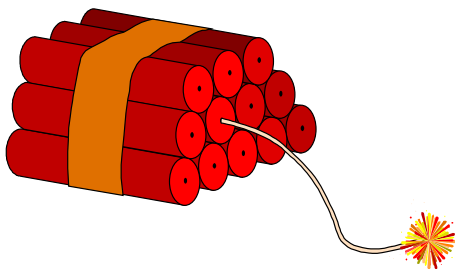
Manitoba Regulation 228/94 Section 88(1)(a) requires that *“no worker shall commence drilling in an underground workplace until the worker has carefully examined the exposed faces for misholes or cut-off holes.”*

Manitoba Regulation 228/94 Section 92(4) requires that *“Where it is impractical to make a thorough examination for a possible mishole, or where a hole that has been blasted has to be redrilled, the employer shall implement a remotely controlled procedure for drilling which shall provide (a) remote controls at a distance established by a competent worker in consultation with the workplace safety and health committee; or (b) shielding to ensure the safety of the worker.”*

The legislation is very clear in that if the worker can not determine if there is a mishole, then all reasonable precautions must be taken to protect the worker while drilling as if there was a mishole.

### Cautionary note

A worker trained as a jumbo driller in a mine will be taught to check the heading and face for misholes and bootlegs on a routine basis. He/she will reblast the misholes found and is trained not to drill within 15 cm of a bootleg. Because drilling of chunks in most mines is a non-routine operation, a worker may not think that an oversize chunk could have a mishole in it, with all the inherent dangers. For this reason, it is very important to establish procedures on how to deal with oversize chunks safely. It is also vital that workers involved receive adequate training in the procedures, and that supervisors remind the workers to follow the procedures on a continuous basis.



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