Excavator Incident

WHAT HAPPENED

Recently, at an operation based on a third party site, the site management asked that we move a 360o long reach excavator from one point to another using an access road made up of pulverised fuel ash (PFA).

The excavator had regularly used this access road, but only when the adjacent lagoon had been drained and allowed to dry out for several says. On this occasion, the lagoon was full of water. Running parallel with the PFA road was another access route made up of hardcore and used to transport the site dumper (GVW 60 tonne).

A request was made by company staff to form a gap in the bund wall in order for the excavator to run on the hardcore. The site management rejected this idea as too complicated. After assessing the PFA road on foot, the task of moving the excavator began at which point the excavator sank into the made up road. The quick thinking operator moved the grab arm preventing the excavator tipping into the lagoon.



Image 1



Image 2

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

Most fatal and serious injuries involving excavators are to a third party, whether it be striking a pedestrian or trapping someone between the excavator and a fixed object. On this occasion, not only were pedestrians at risk, but also the driver of the excavator.

The road had only been geotechnically assessed as stable for mobile plant traffic under dry conditions: Are all haul roads assessed under all foreseeable conditions by a competent person?

There was no bund protection between the excavator and the water: Are all haul roads near water protected by a bund wall, which should be half the height of the diameter of the largest wheel or 1.5 metres, whichever is the greater?

The excavator had a hammer to break the windscreen, but the driver could not release the seatbelt to reach the hammer: Are all hammers in easy reach of the driving seat and have an integrated seat belt cutter?

Although the operator was competent in operating the excavator, he hadn’t been trained in working near water: - Have all operators working near water attended Working Near Water training?

LOCATION:	**MOBILE PLANT**	**ALERT STATUS:**	**Normal**
ACTIVITY:	**TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS / DELIVERY**	**DATE ISSUED:**	**02/03/2012**
SUB ACTIVITY:	**MOBILE PLANT**	**INCIDENT No:**	**00326**